

NAVY NEWS

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BATTLE GROUND

**3 COMMANDO'S
FINAL AFGHAN
EXERCISE**

DUE SOUTH

**GLOUCESTER
AND SCOTT ON
THE EDGE OF
ANTARCTICA**

Scything through the Gulf of Oman at speed, HMS Cumberland draws to the end of her final patrol. For the last time the ship sailed in company with another Type 22, HMS Cornwall, as the duo clamped down on piracy – with definite results in the Fighting 99's case. See pages 5 and 15 for details.

Picture: LA(Phot) Jay Allen, FRPU East

THE LAST HURRAH





Fleet Focus

THERE are two dominant themes this month: pirates and payings-off.

The former were thwarted by **HMS Cornwall** (see page 5)... which will shortly be joining the growing ranks of decommissioned RN vessels and units.

For the final time the Fighting 99 exercised at sea with another Type 22 frigate, **HMS Cumberland** (see page 15); the latter ship is also earmarked for decommissioning.

These past few weeks has seen the passing of Her Majesty's Ships **Chatham** and **Manchester**, **RFA Fort George** and **800 NAS** (Chatham, Fort George and 800 NAS were axed under the defence review, Manchester has reached the end of her natural life); and **HMS Ark Royal's** lengthy wind-down has continued with parades in Portsmouth and Leeds (see pages 6 and 19-21).

Away from this doom and gloom, there is at least some good news. Assault ship **HMS Bulwark** has emerged from refit (with one 'interesting' teething problem for her crew to overcome – see page 4).

The giant jigsaw that is **HMS Queen Elizabeth** is taking shape; another huge section has been slotted into place on the Clyde (see page 4).

A few miles away Britain's newest destroyer, **HMS Diamond**, was exercising with the Sea Kings of HMS Gannet before paying her first visit to Aberdeen, her affiliated city (see page 11).

As for **HMS Gannet** itself, it stands head and shoulders above the rest again when it comes to saving lives; the Prestwick fliers were the Forces No.1 Search and Rescue unit in 2010 (see page 7).

Also in UK waters, the three ships of the Fishery Protection Squadron – **Tyne**, **Mersey** and **Severn** – met in the Solent for their once-a-year exercise (see opposite).

In the Southern Ocean, **HMS Clyde** restored memorials to the men of 1982 (see page 25) while **HMS Gloucester** ventured to South Georgia for a taste of (chilly) paradise (see pages 8-9). The Fighting G's time is nearly up as HMS York has left Portsmouth to replace her (see page 6).

HMS Scott headed even further south to the South Shetlands, the first port of call on her way to surveying waters around Britain's Antarctic territories (see pages 8-9).

In warmer waters, **814 NAS** have been pinging off Sicily at the year's biggest anti-submarine exercise (see right), while their Culdrose-based compatriots in **849**, **854** and **857 NAS** have been rewarded for their efforts in Afghanistan (also see right).

With Cumberland on her way home to pay off, Gulf duties have been handed over to **HMS Iron Duke**, making her debut in these waters (see page 14).

With the demise of the Type 22s imminent, the 23s are now the backbone of the Fleet – and are appropriately very busy.

HMS Northumberland paid her first visit to the North East in a couple of years (see page 6).

HMS Sutherland is preparing to escort **HMS Albion** to the Mediterranean and beyond. Both ships were 'treated' to some 'top-up' training off Plymouth (see pages 10 and 17).

And fresh from pirate busting duties, **HMS Montrose** sent her junior sailors to Dartmouth to teach them the art of low-level leadership (see page 18).

There's a new flag flying from **HMS Ocean** as Britain's biggest warship was named the nation's most effective capital ship (see page 6).

And finally... Godspeed the men and women of **3 Commando Brigade** who will soon be holding the right of the line in Afghanistan. The brigade conducted its final battle exercise before deploying with the **Commando Helicopter Force** on Salisbury Plain (see pages 22-24).



● A Sea King of 854 NAS taxis at Camp Bastion as it prepares for another night-time surveillance mission high above Helmand
Picture: LA(Phot) Alex Cave, 854 NAS

Sea King knights

"NO MEAN feats" by Sea King ground crews have ensured they've picked up a prestigious award.

Against particularly strong competition from the rest of the Fleet Air Arm, the maritime Sea King Force were awarded the Rolls-Royce Engineering Efficiency Trophy.

The award is typically presented to an individual squadron, but the accomplishments of the maritime Sea King Force – that's 771 Naval Air Squadron and Gannet Search and Rescue Flight, plus the trio of 'Bagger' squadrons, 849, 854 and 857 – over the past 12 months so impressed senior officers and Rolls-Royce bosses that they determined the entire force should be recognised.

The two naval Search and Rescue units – Culdrose-based 771 NAS and Gannet at Prestwick in Scotland were scrambled more than 650 times, not counting training missions and other regular duties.

As for the Baggers, the Airborne Surveillance and Control helicopters are the 'eyes in the sky' of Allied ground troops in southern Afghanistan, monitoring the activity of insurgents. The helicopters are in Afghan skies daily – and each sortie lasts several hours.

All this effort in the skies demands an enormous input from the technicians, mechanics and engineers on the ground – for every hour airborne it's reckoned that a Sea King devours around a dozen 'man hours'.

"The last 12 months have seen many of the force operating in Afghanistan in the fight against the insurgents while back in the UK others have continued to conduct Search and Rescue duties around the clock," said Cdr Pat Douglas, Sea King Helicopter Force Commander.

"The achievement of these tasks is no mean feat and we only succeed with the support, dedication and focus of our engineers and maintainers. This is a very proud day for all of us in the Sea King Force."

His words were endorsed by Rear Admiral Tom Cunningham, the head of the Fleet Air Arm who told the Sea King men and women that they'd had "a real impact" in Afghanistan, played a key role in exercises with the Fleet, and provided "unprecedented levels of Search and Rescue response".

He added: "These achievements by Sea King Force engineers have demanded dedication, innovation, agility and efficiency and have been in the finest traditions of the Fleet Air Arm. The Sea King Force fully deserves recognition through the award of the Rolls-Royce Engineering Efficiency Trophy."

The trophy was presented in 771 NAS's recently-modernised hangar at Culdrose in the presence of Cdre David Marsh (Assistant Chief of Staff, Logistics) and Rolls-Royce's Senior Vice President – Engineering and Technology Ian Ritchey as principal guests. With the exception of personnel on front-line duties in Afghanistan, the entire maritime Sea King Force was present.

814 proud, not noble

DOING what they love doing best in the Mediterranean were the men and women of 814 Naval Air Squadron – the Flying Tigers. (That would be 'pinging', by the way).

The Navy's No.1 submarine hunting squadron flew 1,400 miles from its home at Culdrose in Cornwall to Sicily to take part in the world's largest anti-submarine exercise.

Run by NATO, Proud Manta (it used to be called Noble Manta until this year) sees ships, aircraft and submarines from the USA, Canada, Spain, France, Germany, Greece, Turkey plus hosts Italy converging on the central Med for a week.

There were half a dozen submarines for the surface and air forces to 'play' with on the week-long Combined Air-Submarine Exercise or CASEX (also, apparently, known as a 'snoozex' because it's rather repetitive...).

But hey, it's in Sicily. In the sun. And for 814 it was the first chance to do some serious pinging since last year's trip to the USA with the Auriga task group, which proved extremely useful for the squadron.

The Flying Tigers' CO, Cdr Darran Goldsmith, said he "couldn't wait" to go hunting. "Proud Manta provided 814 with the opportunity to hone its anti-submarine skills," he adds. "In addition, for aircrew new to the front line the transit to and from Sicily offered excellent navigation training and experience."

"The interaction with our Italian Merlin counterparts – engineering practices and flying procedures – was a most welcome bonus in an exercise which promised much in a concentrated period of focussed tactical activity."



Ducks all in a row

THE ducks in question being (furthest from the camera to nearest) Her Majesty's Ships Tyne, Mersey and Severn – better known collectively as the Fishery Protection Squadron.

Each of the River-class ships is at sea more than 200 days a year... but only on a solitary day can the three sisters be found together.

So time to get the cameras out. And the killer tomato. And the bosses (that's the CO of the squadron, Cdr Ian Lynn, and the Captain Mine Warfare, Fishery Protection and Diving, Capt Mark Durkin).

The squadron is the oldest unit in the Royal Navy (its history can be traced back to 1379 and an armed trawler which safeguarded the fishing vessels of Yarmouth).

These days it's the fish, not the fishermen requiring the protection of the Royal Navy: the three River-class ships were at sea on fishery protection duties for 675 days last year. Their boarding parties inspected 1,300 vessels, detained 13 and ensured that fishermen who committed serious transgressions of the law received fines totalling some £90,000.

For one day, the fish were put aside, however, as the three vessels headed into the Solent for a 'squadex' – Squadron Exercise – in 'challenging' weather (ie rather lumpy) to test their ability to work together, rather than independently.

That meant some flying serials involving a Lynx from Yeovilton (the ships have winching decks large enough for someone to be lifted on or off by helicopter, but the aircraft themselves are too large to set down) in a Force 7 near gale – with the ships only 100 yards apart at times, some officer of the watch manoeuvres and for the gunners some, er, gunnery.

Gunnery actually became more a case of 'chasery' as the wind carried the killer tomato inflatable target scurrying across the sea at a fair rate of knots... with the three ships chasing after it, opening fire while trying to maintain a safe distance from merchantmen who make heavy use of the Solent and Isle of Wight waters. All good practice...

The three-ship workout was the last day at sea as Mersey's CO for Lt Cdr Carl Wiseman. He's now 10,000 miles away in charge of the trio's souped-up sister (bigger guns, more surveillance kit, flight deck) HMS Clyde in the Falklands.

Before going, he and his deputy and boarding officer joined their counterparts from Severn and Tyne attended a conference to discuss the latest issues in the fishery protection world with experts from the Marine Management Organisation, the government department which oversees fishing quotas.

While the cats were away, the mice were playing as squadron personnel held a sports day to earn bragging rights until next January (see our sports pages to see who won).

Exhausted by discussions, bucket ball and five-a-side, the sailors let their hair down at the annual 'fish ball' in the Royal Beach Hotel in Southsea, alongside MMO staff and employees from BAE Systems – the defence firm which loans the River-class vessels to the Navy and maintains them on behalf of the Senior Service.

Pictures: LA(Photos) Kyle Heller and Gaz Weatherston



Guess Hu's coming to dinner

SO WHAT do you do if you're stuck on a hydrographic survey vessel on a Thursday in February in Bahrain, February 3 to be precise?

Well, obviously, you celebrate Chinese New Year.

Officers from the Qiandao Hu – a 23,000-tonne supply ship similar to the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's Forts – joined the ship's company of HMS Echo to see in the Year of the Golden Rabbit which, apparently, is a good omen.

Aside from an excuse to have some top Chinese food for lunch aboard the Qiando Hu, there was a chance for the crews of the respective ships to discuss the concerted international effort against pirates and other ne'er-do-wells operating in the Indian Ocean-Gulf region.

With its merchantmen – like those from other nations – threatened by Somali pirates, the People's Liberation Army (Navy) has committed naval forces to these waters since the end of 2008.

As for Echo, her efforts to make these waters safe are rather more benign: she's just arrived in the region for two years of surveying work in the Red Sea, Gulf, Indian Ocean, Middle East and Far East.

Divers deal with detritus

DIVERS were called to East Sussex when a vintage torpedo was found floating close to busy shipping lanes.

The fishing boat Royal Sovereign came across the 55-year-old weapon while trawling off Beachy Head.

Its skipper took pictures of the device, which were sent to Southern Diving Unit 2 in Portsmouth, before carefully towing the aged torpedo closer to shore – and well away from the Newhaven-Dieppe ferry route.

An initial inspection of the photographs by the RN experts showed that the weapon's warhead and propeller had rotted away, but to make sure the divers headed to East Sussex.

A look at the torpedo 'in the flesh' confirmed that it was safe and that all that was left were the pressure vessel and engine part.

A stamp on the weapon showed that it was last tested back in 1955.

Satisfied that the torpedo was inert, it was brought into Eastbourne's Sovereign Harbour by the RN team; it's now due to be picked up by a collector.

Anything the SDU can do their northern counterparts can match.

The Faslane-based divers were on their way to Heysham in Lancashire where there were reports of mortar shells being washed up.

As PO Richard 'Buster' Brown and LD Allan Lofthouse headed down the M6 they received fresh instructions from base: *pop into Millom in Cumbria on your way back – there's a couple of naval shells we want you to take a look at.*

Having disposed of one of the two mortars at Heysham (the other one was devoured by the tide), the pair headed to the small Cumbrian coastal town just 23 miles away.

There they found a pair of 7.5in shells from late WW1 specifically designed for sinking U-boats.

"The steel shells were from test firings," said Buster. "We just collected them and returned them to their rightful owners."

The Northern Diving Group team was called out to 93 incidents in 2010 – including 77 times to conventional munitions such as the detritus of two world wars, but on six occasions the bomb disposal experts were called to deal with improvised explosive devices – home-made bombs.



Picture: LA(Phot) Martin Carney, FRPU West

Call in the chain gang

NOW this is a sight to warm the cockles of British hearts in a cold, dark winter.

We're not talking about this wonderfully atmospheric shot of HMS Bulwark putting to sea for the first time in nearly a year in the fading light of a winter's afternoon.

No, we're talking about the sight of sheer physical man (and woman) power. Because this new fangled industrial age lark is all very well but sometimes you just need a bit of raw human strength.

Actually *a lot* of raw human strength. Say 300 matelots' worth for more than five hours.

The 18,500-tonne assault ship was anchored in Weymouth Bay carrying out flying trials from her flight deck when sailors realised there was something wrong at the bow.

The buffer and his team found that the anchor simply wouldn't budge; there was no way of lifting it using mechanical means.

"In my 24 years of service, it's the first time I have ever witnessed this," said Bulwark's buffer CPO 'George' Hibbert. "I was reluctant to cut the chain or anchor and let it drop into the sea because they are in limited supply, so we decided to haul it in by hand power alone."

Which is no mean feat.



● 2-6! Heave! Bulwark's crew toil to lift the anchor chain manually

Picture: LA(Phot) Shaun Barlow, HMS Bulwark

The anchor weighs four tonnes (8,800lb – or about the weight of three Ford Focuses... or should that be Foci?).

And the anchor chain weighs 56 tonnes (123,000lb – or about 48 Ford Focuses... or should that be Foci?). It's also 270 metres (885ft) long – which is 300ft longer than Bulwark herself.

The entire ship's company was split into groups and the process began.

Working in teams of 30, they pulled the chain up a small section

at a time before moving forward and repeating the process in excess of a 100 times.

Initial estimates suggested that it could take up to 24 hours to recover; however, with the combined effort and enthusiasm (that's what it says here...) of the Bulwarks, the anchor finally lifted clear of the water in 5 hours and 20 minutes. At not much under a metre a minute, this truly was a mammoth achievement.

"It was an awesome achievement by the entire ship's company, who

managed to lift 270 metres of cable from 25 metres below the sea allowing us to continue with our busy trials," said Bulwark's CO Capt Alex Burton.

So that's one 'little' issue ironed out following L15's eight-month overhaul in the hands of Babcock in Devonport.

Bulwark has spent the past month at sea undergoing thorough tests and trials to check if what had been done during her refit worked (and to blow away a few cobwebs among the ship's company).

In the eight months in dry dock and inner basin at Devonport, some £32m was spent revamping the ship's machinery spaces, magazines, her high voltage propulsion system, advanced communication sensors, computer and IT network, and upgrades to her defensive weapons systems.

Another significant improvement has been Bulwark's conversion to full tactical night vision for her landing craft and helicopters; the overhaul means that she will now be able to operate two Chinooks simultaneously from her flight deck.

Bulwark will spend the rest of the year working up, culminating in Operational Sea Training, after which she'll assume amphibious flagship duties from her older sister HMS Albion which is leading this year's major task force deployment (*see page 10*).

Next stage of Clyde revamp under way

WORK has begun in Faslane on a £4m indoor range to improve marksmanship of sailors, commandos and MOD police based at the Scottish establishment.

Over the next 12 months the state-of-the-art Firearms Training Centre will arise on the site of old garages, which should have been flattened by the time you read this.

The new simulator building is the second stage of a mightily-ambitious £380m transformation of Faslane over the coming decade as the base eventually becomes the sole home of the Silent Service – the official term is the 'Submarine Centre of Specialisation'.

To meet the requirements not only of the new Astute boats but also of the hundreds of sailors who'll be based on the Clyde as a result of the transfer of the remaining Trafalgar-class submarines from Devonport – as announced under the 2009 shake-up of base porting vessel – around 30 building projects are in the pipeline, the culmination of five years of planning.

A new incident command and control centre is already being built.

Future projects include providing an extra 510 'single living accommodation' rooms for Royal Navy/Royal Marines personnel stationed at Faslane, new outdoor sports facilities and providing new engineering and waterfront facilities.

Thank-you to Chid and Mid

THE senior British sailor east of Suez praised the efforts of HMS Chiddingfold and Middleton as their crews' six-month stint in the Gulf came to an end.

From his headquarters in Bahrain Cdre Tim Fraser and his staff on the UK Maritime Component Command choreograph the activities of RN and RFA vessels in the Indian Ocean and Gulf region.

The number of ships – and personnel – ebbs and flows, but there are never fewer than four minehunters, two Hunts and two Sandowns.

Their crews are rotated with comrades back home every six or so months.

In this instance, the ship's companies of Middleton and the Cheery Chid are returning to Portsmouth to take over other Hunts.

Visiting the two ships at Mina Salman port, Cdre Fraser told the assembled sailors: "You have done a splendid job, often in very challenging climatic conditions."

"This is a vitally-strategic region and your presence here has helped to protect British interests and provide support to the local region."

NATO role for Brocklesby

MINEHUNTER HMS Brocklesby has taken her place alongside NATO allies as she spends six months in the Mediterranean and beyond.

The Portsmouth-based Hunt is attached to Mine Countermeasures Group 1, currently led by the Polish ship ORP Kontradmiral Xawery Czerniki and comprising vessels from Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium (although the changing nature of the group means that ships from Canada and Italy will also join the force during 2011).

The task group will carry out exercises and active mine disposal work in the Med, waters off North Africa and western Europe before Brocklesby returns to her home port in July.



Block capital (ship)

IFYOU want an idea of the scale of Britain's future carriers, this photograph should provide a few clues.

This is one gigantic section of HMS Queen Elizabeth being manoeuvred into the ship hall at BAE Systems' Govan yard on the Clyde...

...where it was attached to another section to form Lower Block 03 – the mid-section – of the 65,000-tonne leviathan.

It took just an hour to move this segment from one part of the yard to the shed using a series of remote-controlled transporters and a team of 20 workers.

When complete the joined block will weigh more than 9,300 tonnes. It stands 23 metres tall (75ft) and is 40 metres wide (131ft). And big though this section is, it only goes up to the hangar deck.

"Seeing the mid-section of the carrier come together brings into sharp focus the sheer scale and complexity of this engineering feat," said Steven Carroll, in charge of the carrier project at BAE Systems.

"It's one of the biggest engineering projects in the UK today – second only to the 2012 Olympics – and we're all very proud to be a part of it."

Six yards across the UK and 8,000 shipwrights, technicians and engineers are building sections of the two carriers, with thousands more people employed in the enormous supply chain providing kit for the ships.

Fitting out of Lower Block 03 is now being carried out before the block is floated around to Rosyth where the Queen Elizabeth is being assembled later this year.

Picture: BAE Systems

F99 ends 92-day hell

RAISING their arms in the air under the guns of HMS Cornwall, 17 Somali pirates surrender to the frigate – bringing to an end a 92-day reign of terror.

For this pirate 'mother ship' is actually a Yemeni fishing boat – with five of its crew held hostage by the 17 brigands since early November.

The fishermen have now been freed, the pirate skiffs (and all the associated piratical paraphernalia – two boarding ladders, powerful outboard motors, fuel drums, and an arsenal including five rocket propelled grenades and automatic weapons) sent to Davy Jones' Locker thanks to Cornwall's boarding team.

The Fighting 99 responded to a distress signal from a South Korean merchantman after the Yong Jin spotted the dhow acting suspiciously.

The Type 22 stopped the battered vessel from attacking the Yong Jin, then prepared to board with the ship's Lynx hovering overhead. It was, said Cornwall's CO Cdr David Wilkinson, "a very slick operation".

The team from Fleet Protection Group Royal Marines found 22 souls on board and plenty of evidence of pirate activity.

Further investigation revealed that five of the men were Yemenis, the rightful masters of the dhow. They'd been held prisoner by the Somalis since November 11.

The freebooters had then turned the dhow into their mother ship, ranging around the Horn of Africa, using three skiffs to carry out pirate raids.

"Our presence had a hugely-significant effect on the lives of the five Yemeni fishermen," said Cdr Wilkinson.

"They've been freed from more than three months of pirate activity and can now return to their families."

With no legal powers to detain the pirates, only to destroy their kit, the ship returned the Somalis to their native land before resuming her mission as the flagship of Combined Task Force 151 in the Gulf of Aden.

The pirate bust came at the end of an eventful few days for the Type 22 frigate which has seen her work alongside a string of friends, old and new (well, *newer*).

First up an encounter with HMS Active – today flying the Pakistani flag as PNS Shah Jahan.

The task force Cornwall leads is currently headed by Pakistan's Cdre Aleem and his staff, and when Shah Jahan joined 151, it allowed a bit of an Anglo-Pakistani get together.

While the Shah Jahan's Alouette helicopter ferried Cdre Aleem to the Pakistani frigate, Cornwall ship's company enjoyed a rather more basic form of transport to take them across to the new arrival (ie sea boat).

A number of sailors from both ships 'cross-pollinated' for a glimpse of life in the respective navies, among them ET(WE) Sam Cassidy. He's too young to have served on Type 21 frigates... but he knows a man who did.

"It was amazing being in a ship that my father knew so well and that I had visited as a little boy – the memories came flooding back," he said.

"I've taken loads of photos for my dad and can't wait to tell him all about it! And it was great to see her in such good shape and at the centre of Pakistan navy operations."

Active was laid down 40 years ago and served under the White Ensign, earning battle honours in the Falklands, until 1994 when she was sold to Pakistan.

Shah Jahan crew were given a tour of the ship, received briefings on the current state of play in the fight against piracy and watched Cornwall's upper deck team demonstrate how to deal with a small surface contact, while the Fighting 99's Royal Marines boarding party worked with their Pakistani counterparts.

Apart from the meet 'n' greets and tours, there was an operational side to the rendezvous: as Shah Jahan has only recently joined CTF 151 this was an ideal opportunity for her key personnel to be brought up to date with activity in the region, including intelligence and situational briefs and some boarding training.

More poignant was the last exercise in tandem with another Type 22, joining forces with HMS Cumberland in the Gulf of Oman (*see page 15 for more about that*).

Fresh from those rendezvous, time for an encounter with another well-known comrade.

This time the Indian Ocean meet-up was with HMS Richmond, new to the area as she begins European Union humanitarian duties.

As the Type 23 has just arrived in Pirate Alley, while the Fighting 99 is an old hand, Richmond called upon Cornwall's expertise.

Her command team received a thorough briefing on the latest information regarding brigandage in the region from Cdr Wilkinson and his team.

As for Richmond, she's attached to the European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) under the direction of Spain's Rear Admiral Juan Rodriguez.

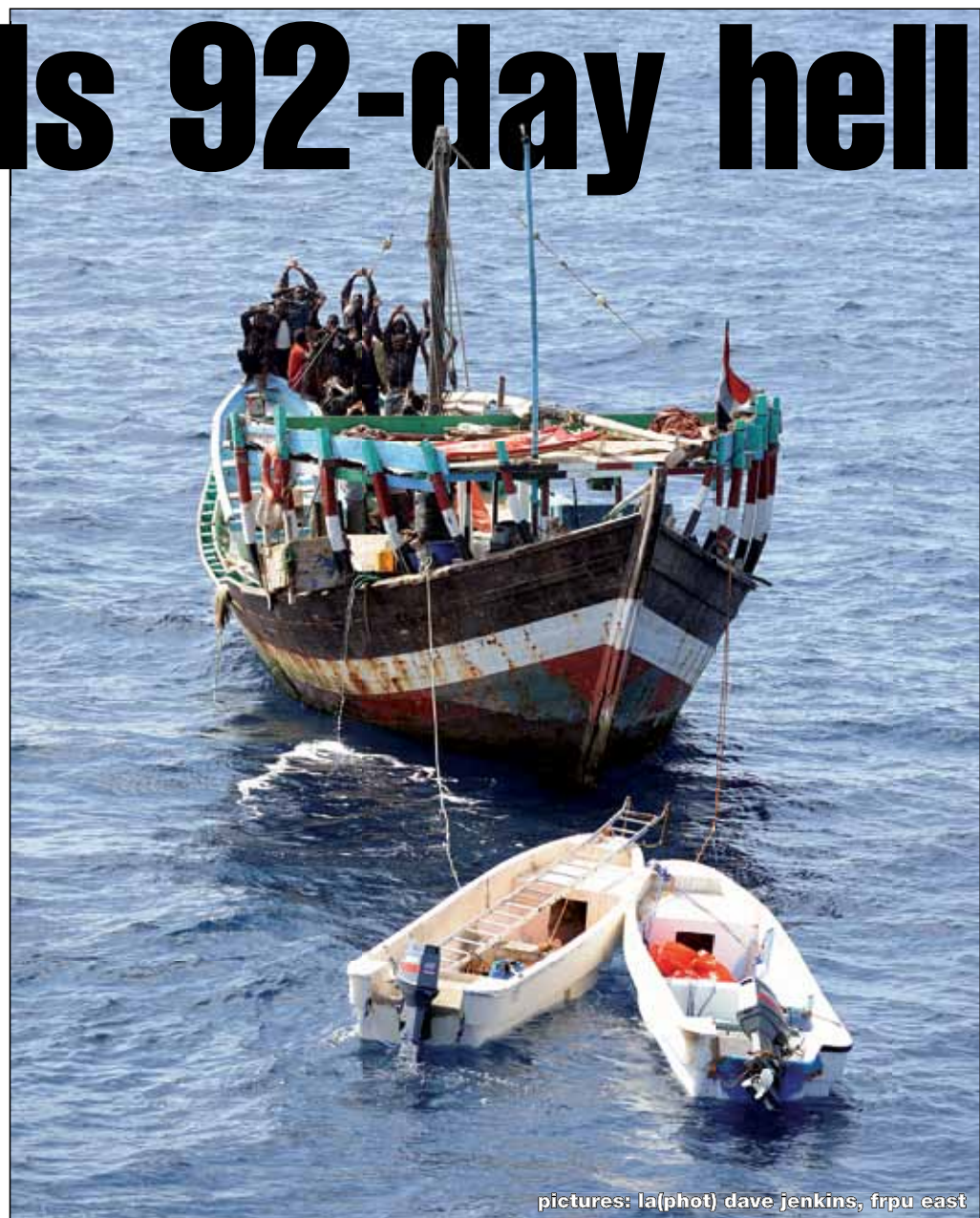
As part of her wider anti-piracy mission, the newly-arrived frigate will shepherd aid ships into Somalia.

Richmond has been charged with escorting ships through the pirate gauntlet to ports in Somalia as part of the UN World Food Programme; half the Somali population depends upon these deliveries for their survival.

"It is this challenge that provides the greatest reward for many of the sailors in HMS Richmond, knowing that they have a key part to play in some of the most important events of today," said the frigate's Commanding Officer Capt Mike Walliker.

Before the rendezvous with Chatham, Richmond had paid a short visit to Djibouti – a first for many of the Type 23's ship's company.

As well as the usual tasks – maintenance, calls on local leaders and discussions about Richmond's impending mission in the Indian Ocean – there were runs out for the warship's rugby and football teams.



pictures: la(phot) dave jenkins, frpu east

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51°S for the fastest 42

PUNCHING through the South Atlantic at speed right about now is HMS York, bound for the Falklands to relieve her sister.

Britain's fastest destroyer (34kts) is due in the Falklands in the middle of the month, allowing her sister Gloucester (see pages 8-9) to head home.

The Type 42 will spend a few months in and around the Falklands and South Georgia, returning to Portsmouth in July via the Caribbean and finally the USA.

To ready York for the deployment south again (her previous tour of duty over the Austral summer of 2009-10 was also to the Falklands), the ship has received two new gas turbines and she has loosed no fewer than seven Sea Dart missiles on the ranges off the Outer Hebrides to prove her main weapon system was fully functioning.

"We've been preparing hard for this deployment and I'm delighted with my ship's company's response to the training," said Commanding Officer Cdr Simon Staley.

"Our families deserve a very special mention – and thanks – too. They have been the very cornerstone of strength for us all throughout a hugely-demanding period of regeneration.

"By sheer distance from the UK – and in the face of a harsh South Atlantic winter – the deployment will present some real challenges for us all, but this will be balanced by the visits to some wonderfully diverse countries."



THERE'S something suitably poignant about the tones in this moving image of RFA Fort George making her final entry to Devonport (courtesy of LA (Phot) Nicola Wilson of FRPU West).

The one-stop support ship is one of the 'forgotten victims' of the Strategic Defence and Security Review; while all the media attention (and *Navy News* fell into this trap admittedly) focused on the demise of HMS Ark Royal, the Harrier jump jets and all four Type 22 frigates, three auxiliaries were also axed – a smaller surface fleet requires a smaller support fleet.

So the plug was pulled on veteran tanker RFA Bayleaf, nearly-new amphibious ship RFA Largs Bay and Fort George, 17 years old and – with her still-in-service sister Fort Victoria – the largest ship in the Fleet.

While Fort George's demise may be untimely, she goes out on a high. She ended 2010 as the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's 'Ship of the Year', a title she earned after winning the Commander-in-Chief's Surface Ship

Effectiveness trophy for her work supporting a sizeable RN task force (two carriers, one assault ship and a couple of escorts) on the Auriga deployment to the USA.

In her 17-year career, the ship earned the Sword of Peace for her work helping flood victims in Mozambique in 2000, quickly followed by the peace mission to stabilise Sierra Leone in the wake of civil war.

She was in the Hong Kong for the former colony's return to Chinese rule, supported initial operations in Afghanistan over the winter of 2001-02 and was the host ship for the Royal Naval Reserve during the Trafalgar 200 Spithead review.

As for Fort George's wind-down, aside from de-storing there will be a farewell dinner for the ship's sponsor Lady Slater and her husband Admiral Sir Jock Slater before the ship is finally disposed of. **Farewell to HMS Chatham, Manchester, Ark Royal and 800 NAS, pages 19-21**



The big Northumberland family

THE trophy cabinet aboard HMS Northumberland is bulging (well, a little fuller) courtesy of two 'gongs' the ship's company have earned.

The first is the prize treasured among the anti-submarine warfare community: the ASW trophy.

Although Northumberland was sent east of Suez for eight months last year chiefly to support the international counter-piracy/counter-terrorism mission, she kept her hand in at a Type 23's original mission: hunting submarines.

That reached its climax last summer with a major nine-day exercise in the Gulf of Oman with HMS Talent as the frigate's prey.

In addition to a real boat to play with, the frigate hunted down a dummy submarine on two occasions.

The ship launched her

EMATT, or Expendable Mobile Anti-Submarine Warfare Training Target – a 3ft-long device which looks like a small torpedo and simulates a boat, operating at pre-programmed speeds and depths, emitting noises like the real thing.

Northumberland streamed her towed array Sonar 2087 and sent her Merlin up with its Sonobuoys to track down the hi-tech device.

Just for good measure, the ship's torpedo launchers fired two dummy Sting Rays (subsequently recovered) while the electronic anti-torpedo decoys were also fired, and the Sonar 2170 torpedo defence system was streamed on more than half a dozen occasions.

All in all, quite a lot of pinging. In addition, the ship also collected reams of data on water depth, temperatures, salinity and the like.

All this info was passed back to experts at the Maritime Warfare Centre in HMS Collingwood and the UK Hydrographic Office in

Taunton... and resulted in the ship's Principal Warfare Officer (Underwater) Lt Cdr Alex Burton receiving the ASW trophy from Cdre Richard Baum, the Naval Regional Commander for Northern England, when the ship visited the North-East.

The second award went not to a department but two engineers.

The Lady Anne Kerr Trophy is presented every year by the ship's sponsor to the sailor/department who've contributed the most to life on board.

In 2010 that was two marine engineers, POs Kev Philips and Iain Price who embodied the ship's 'minimum fuss, maximum effort' approach to operations.

The duo worked outside normal hours to avoid disrupting the deployment as they overhauled one of the gas turbines and the

gearbox which added an extra *two* knots to the Type 23's top speed.

The results of their toils were, said Northumberland's CO Cdr Paddy Allen, "above and beyond expectation" and the two senior rates were worthy winners of the trophy, presented by Lady Kerr during that visit to the North East.

That return to Tyneside – the first for the frigate since 2008 – saw Northumberland spend five days, appropriately, at Northumbrian Quay in North Shields appraising affiliates of deeds accomplished since the last time she visited.

The Duke of Northumberland was the guest of honour. He not only chatted with the ship's company but also members of the 5th Battalion the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers – the local Army unit.

The fusiliers provided a Guard of Honour alongside the ship's company, inspected by the duke on a chilly Tyneside jetty, before soldiers, sailors and VIPs decamped inside for a warm cuppa and a chat.

Among the soldiers was Capt Chris Hall of Z Company... an ex-matelot who spent 21 years in the RN, including drafts to two Type 23s before leaving the Service and crossing over to the dark side.

"I love being in the Army – and I loved being in the Royal Navy. There are many more similarities than differences," he said.

"I caught up with some old mates on board and every bit of the ship holds a thought or memory of friends, operations and events."

The frigate also hosted pupils from local schools, Sea Cadets, youth groups and potential recruits, plus Duchess Elizabeth, who served in the WRNS in World War 2 and who follows the frigate's activities keenly.

In addition, the ship opened her gangway to visitors and sent her rugby team on to the pitch against Morpeth RFC.

In addition to these fairly typical events on an affiliate visit, there was one unusual ceremony held on board the frigate.

The ship hosted a 'citizenship

ceremony' for people who've settled in this country to formally become part of the UK family – believed to be the first time one of Her Majesty's ships has been the venue for such proceedings.

The ceremonies have been held since the mid-Noughties, with prospective citizens asked to swear allegiance to the Queen and to pledge their loyalty to the UK and its laws and customs.

On the return journey from the Tyne to Devonport, the ship's manifest was 'plus two' as Northumbrian couple Keith and Lesley Newman climbed on board.

Keith (boss of a public relations firm) and his wife (an antiques trader) won an auction helping a North East disability charity to spend four days on the warship.

As well as receiving a full tour of Northumberland, the couple were encouraged to 'muck in'.

Keith drove the Pacific 24 sea boat, while Lesley donned chef's whites in the galley to help the caterers prepare a curry.

They stepped ashore in Devonport with nothing but praise for Cdr Allen and his sailors.

"We already had huge respect for the work the Royal Navy does at home and abroad, but our special time with them has really reinforced our sense of gratitude to all our Servicemen and women," said Keith.

"What struck me was the bond holding everyone together onboard, coupled with a great sense of pride in their ship. It was like being part of a big family."

Westminster pays her dues

VISITING London as we went to press was the nation's 'capital ship', HMS Westminster.

The Type 23 frigate was spending five days alongside Canary Wharf, allowing her to renew ties with numerous affiliates in the London area.

It's been two years since the Portsmouth-based warship last sailed up the Thames (back in 2009 it was for the London Boat Show), so there was quite a bit of catching up to do with those affiliates.

They were given tours of the



Mighty O Efficient O Cheery O

WHAT'S this crisp new blue and white flag adorned with hippocampi billowing in the breeze?

That's the Fleet Efficiency Pennant.

And which mast does it fly from?

Well that would be the main mast of HMS Ocean, where it can be seen throughout 2011.

Britain's biggest warship was also deemed her most effective capital ship last year by the assessors from the Flag Officer Sea Training – people who are not easily pleased.

The helicopter assault ship squeezed a lot into last year, culminating in a five-month, 16,000-mile deployment around the North and South Atlantic rim.

That took the Mighty O initially to North America for amphibious operations with the Americans, then there was a spot of counter-drugs work in the Caribbean before crossing the Equator for a rare visit to Brazil and training with the South American nation's marines.

Then on the other side of the ocean, the carrier visited Nigeria and Sierra Leone (where she's still fondly remembered as the 'ship of hope' from her role in peacekeeping during the 2000 civil war), worked with sailors from half a dozen African nations, took part in more counter-drugs patrols and a fleet review.

The FOSTies didn't just judge what Ocean physically accomplished, but also the goodwill and media effect the ship had in 2010.

That meant considerable coverage in the newspapers and on TV wherever the ship went on her travels (as well as by the press back home in the UK), plus Ocean's webpages where it was not tales of derring do by commandos, WAFUs or sailors but the story of a cat which proved popular. Not even a live cat, but a stuffed one.

Despite being an inanimate furry object, the cunningly-titled 'Ship's Cat' got up to all sorts of high jinx (sleeping, skydiving, sleeping, going for flights in the Lynx, sleeping), all meticulously recorded in a blog which "became one of the most widely-read defence internet sites".

Oh and we haven't mentioned the five weeks in Norway for Exercise Cold Response, two months of Basic Operational Sea Training, a visit by the Queen and a three-month spell of maintenance.

"If you wanted to illustrate the sorts of things navies can do for you, just look at what Ocean did," said her CO Capt Keith Blount as he received the Capital Ship Effectiveness Trophy from FOST himself, Rear Admiral Chris Snow.

ship, as were schoolchildren interested in a life in the Senior Service, and cadets from across the London metropolitan region.

Any stay on the Thames by one of Her Majesty's warships demands the payment of a barrel of rum to the Tower of London, upholding an ancient custom going back to the days when the fortification's guns provided protection to ships on the river.

Westminster paid her dues and, being a nice chap, the Constable of the Tower allowed the sailors to join him in a tot or two.

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THE busiest didn't get busier – but it is still the busiest.

No Search and Rescue unit in the UK – civilian or military – was called out more times in 2010 than HMS Gannet, the fourth year in a row that the Prestwick-based Fleet Air Arm unit was the busiest in the land.

Last year actually saw a drop in scrambles for its Sea Kings – the helicopters received 379 call-outs, down 68 on 2009.

But Gannet – which provides emergency cover across an area of 98,000 square miles (12 times the size of Wales...) spanning Northern Ireland, Scotland, the Isle of Man and Lake District – was still the most in-demand SAR centre, accounting for one fifth of all the rescues carried out by the eight RAF/RN units dedicated to Search and Rescue.

In all 324 people were saved/assisted by Gannet crews in 2010: 145 of the helicopters' missions last year were medical rescues, a further 80 were medical transfers.

"Once again these high figures reflect the nature of the vast – and sometimes harsh – area covered by Gannet," said CO Lt Cdr Debdash Bhattacharya.

"I'm extremely proud of the men and women who make up not only our aircrew, but also our ground staff – military and civilian – who work tirelessly to ensure that we're ready to fly at a moment's notice to save lives."

Among Gannet's notable missions last year were:

- a climber rescued from Ben Lomond; her fellow climber carved a six-foot-high SOS in the snow and drew a huge arrow to help the fliers find her;
 - premature twins flown from Stornaway to Glasgow for expert medical care in an eight-hour sortie;
 - two divers plucked out of strong currents near the Mull of Galloway – despite thick rolling fog;
 - four walkers rescued in the Lake District on the same day having been struck by lightning.
- 2011 for Gannet has begun in the same vein... busy.
- No sortie was more surprising than the rescue of 36-year-old climber Adam Potter.

The Sea King crew expected to find the Glaswegian mountaineer's body – or at the very least a severely-injured man – after responding to a distress call about a climber who'd fallen from the 3,589ft summit of Sgurr Choinnich Mor, around five miles east of Ben Nevis.

When the helicopter reached the scene – just 30 minutes after receiving the call – they found the peak partially obscured by low cloud, but they found Mr Potter's fellow climbers, who pointed in the direction that he fell.

"We began to hover taxi down the slope and spotted a man at the bottom, standing up," said observer Lt Tim Barker.

"We honestly thought it couldn't have been him, as he was on his feet reading a map. It seemed impossible. So we retraced our path back up the mountain and, sure enough, there were bits of his kit in a vertical line all the way up where he had obviously lost them during the fall.

"It was quite incredible. He must have literally glanced off the outcrops as he fell, almost flying."

Paramedic PO Taff Ashman was winched down. He found that apart from some superficial cuts and bruises and a minor chest injury, the climber was relatively unscathed.

"He was shaking from extreme emotional shock and the sheer relief at still being alive," Lt Barker added.

"We checked the height while we were in the hover and we were at pretty much bang on 2,600ft, making his fall 1,000ft from the summit."

Mr Potter was winched into the Sea King and taken to Glasgow Southern General Hospital where medics discovered that apart from cuts and bruises, the climber had broken his back in three places, though without damage to the spinal chord, so he could still walk about with ease.

"He is lucky to be alive," Lt Barker continued. "It's hard to believe that someone could have fallen that distance on that terrain and been able to stand up at the end of it, let alone chat to us in the helicopter on the way to the hospital."

Picture: CPO(Phot) Tam McDonald, FRPU North



Still the star SAR



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Southern

IT IS rumoured that some senior officers have been heard to say “no more bloody penguins!” when perusing the latest dispatch from ships deployed to the bottom half of the world. However, what is a photographer to do when the birds just throw themselves into a previously perfectly penguin-less photo-shoot?

Not to mention the difficulty in complying with guidance to stay away from wildlife, when a sailor is just having a little lie-down at the water’s edge waiting for the sea-boat, and the local fur seal pups decide to join him.

This is the nature of the South Georgia patrol, the regular insertion of one steely grey HM warship into one of the world’s most pristine environments, and this time the turn of HMS Gloucester, extending herself down to 54° 50’ South in the last of her five months patrolling the South Atlantic islands.

When the Fighting G was last down South Georgia way more than a year ago, the snow was over a foot deep right the way down to the beach.

January being the height of the southern summer, the jagged mountains and glaciers of the Allardyce range were this time showing a rather different face – they were visible, for a start, in gleaming sunshine.

Instead of three-tonne bull elephant seals fighting for harems, this time the beaches were thronged with inquisitive fur seal pups.

Maybe it is a lesson learned from living among the elephant seals, but adult fur seals tend not to be too keen on tall creatures.

Combine this with their tendency to lurk, invisible, in the tall grass, and you have a recipe for sailors scampering along the shingle with a set of sharp teeth in hot pursuit.

However, as several of Gloucester’s ship’s company discovered, sit down and mind your own business, and the wildlife cannot resist investigating.

Inevitably, however, there was work to do as well (let us not forget that...).

For the British Antarctic Survey, Gloucester’s visit was an opportunity to bring stores, move people and gear around and – most importantly – use the precious resource of the Lynx helicopter for conservation work.

The aircraft was employed on aerial photographic surveys of eight glaciers, and comparison with previous photos will allow the BAS to determine if the glaciers are retreating and how fast.

In South Georgia, this has a particularly critical importance for the millions of ground-nesting birds, as the glaciers are the only thing preventing the devastating spread of egg-stealing rats to several areas.

Darren Christie, South Georgia Environment Officer, said: “The photos were absolutely brilliant.

“I can’t emphasise enough how important this information is to the management of the island, and it isn’t something that we could easily have achieved without Gloucester’s assistance.”

The spectacular rugged terrain is an obvious place to achieve some adventurous training too.

Over two days, 35 of the ship’s company traced the part of Shackleton’s epic 1916 cross-island journey from Fortuna Bay to Stromness.

ET(ME) Rob ‘Baz’ Billson said: “South Georgia is the most amazing place I’ve ever been.

● (Right) HMS Gloucester in Cumberland Bay, South Georgia

Pictures:
PO(Phot) Ray Jones (HMS Scott) and
LA(Phot) Terry Boughton (HMS Gloucester)

“I have never been anywhere like this, with all the penguins and seals and the mountains.

“It’s amazing to think how Shackleton crossed the whole island, not even with a pusser’s bagged meal. I was blowing getting up just one of those ridges.”

Most of the ship’s company also took the opportunity at Grytviken to visit Shackleton’s grave, which is inscribed with his favourite quote from Browning: “I hold that a man should strive to his uttermost for his life’s set prize.”

Not a bad inspiration.

Whatever the work and training, however, there is no doubt that even for the most hardened of Gloucester’s many old and bold, South Georgia was the highlight of a long seven-month deployment just for its sheer, astounding beauty.

CO Cdr David George said: “To go to such a place is an immense privilege.

“For sailors, it’s something unusual: low-intensity, not warlike, but it reminds us that there are other things.

“Things that are worth striving or fighting for come in many shapes and sizes, and one of them is that this wonderful haven should

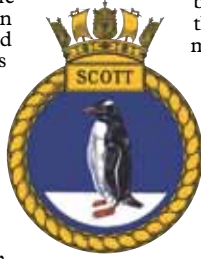
be conserved, which in this day and age has to be managed by people like the British Antarctic Survey and South Georgia Government.

“We’ve been able to support that, and, with the lads getting ashore to be absolutely awe-struck by what was there, they probably think it’s one of the most worthwhile tasks they could be doing.”

Maybe, after all, it is all about the penguins...

While alongside in Mare Harbour, back in the Falklands, Gloucester met up with ocean survey vessel HMS Scott, which recently returned to the Southern Ocean for her second season amongst the ice of Antarctica.

Having left Devonport in late



rendezvous

November, Scott took just over two months to make her way to the Antarctic Circle in time for the austral summer.

The 13,500-ton ship has faced the worst of the Southern Ocean in recent weeks, but the winds of over 60 knots, sea state 7 and six metres of swell have been weathered without too much drama.

When she met up with HMS Gloucester, like all matelots away from home, the first thought on everyone's minds was a sporting encounter.

Despite having a third the crew of Gloucester, Scott put up a spirited performance, ending up 2-1 winners.

Scott will spend the austral summer conducting work for the Foreign Office, UK Hydrographic Office and the British Antarctic Survey in and around the Antarctic Peninsula.

Whether this is the inspection of fishing vessels, Antarctic research stations or unique areas of scientific interest, Scott will be enforcing and observing the stringent environmental protective measures of the Antarctic Treaty.

This helps to ensure that the unspoilt nature of Antarctica is maintained.

In addition, Scott will continue her deep water survey work, mapping the Antarctic Ocean and seas to ensure safe passage for the plethora of cruise ships that are now visiting the region.

Commanding Officer Cdr George Tabcart said: "The ice patrol ship deployment is a privileged step change from Scott's usual tasking of ocean survey."

"The capabilities of the ship allow a variety of alternative activities that are complementary to the work that has been previously undertaken by HMS Endurance."

"With safety of life paramount in these remote waters, our survey work will ensure that tourists can safely visit the pristine environment and witness the abundance of wildlife."

● HMS Scott off King George Island, the largest of the South Shetland Islands in Antarctica (above right) and HMS Gloucester in Drygalsky Fjord, South Georgia (right)



● A sailor from HMS Scott photographs wildlife – in this case a fur seal – on Deception Island in the South Shetlands

● HMS Gloucester attempts to replenish at sea with RFA Black Rover; the evolution was postponed until the weather abated



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Clan destined for greatness

EMERGING slowly from the swirling, seething mist of a winter's morn off Plymouth, the nation's flagship serenely prepares for another day of fire, flood, air attack, torpedoing – basically everything the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse (also known as FOST) can throw at her this day.

But we're not interested in Her Majesty's Ship Albion (well, not yet anyway).

No, we're interested in the vessel from which this photograph was taken – HMS Sutherland – where the ship's company are preparing for another day of fire, flood, air attack, torpedoing – basically everything the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse (also known as FOST) can throw at them...

In April Albion will lead the Cougar task group, an amphibious force heading to the Mediterranean and east of Suez to work with the UK's allies.

At her side will be HMS Sutherland, charged with protecting the flagship from attacks by air and sea... not entirely unlike 2010.

Last year the Type 23 headed to the USA with Ark Royal and Albion as escort. Ark, sadly, has passed into history. The assault ship has not – and she needs safeguarding.

Just in case any skills have faded aboard Albion and

Sutherland since they returned from the United States in August, they've been given some 'top-up training' (the official term is Directed Continuation Training) courtesy of the Flag Officer Sea Training and his team.

And so as the morning mist gradually disperses in Plymouth Sound it reveals a multinational array of warships gearing up for today's stern test.

Three of the four horsemen are saddling up: conquest, war and death (and if the chefs struggle with the action messing, famine too might put in an appearance...).

Indeed, it's not long before the all-too-familiar smell of 'minimist' training smoke, shrill blast of whistles in the ops room and the deafening Loud Vocal Alarm (aka shouting) are commonplace aboard Sutherland.

Throw in a bit of flooding, battle damage, some dodgy pirates, the odd missile attack, a few fast patrol boats, screaming Hawks, screaming PWOs. You

get the picture.

Not that the Fighting Clan/Mighty Suth (we prefer the former) is passive in all this.

Her Merlin headed off a-hunting, loosing a dummy torpedo at a suspected submarine.

Having dispensed with foes *under* the water, the helicopter went after foes *on* the water, accompanied by the ship's seaboats crammed with a boarding team from Fleet Protection Group Royal Marines. They went in search of – and found – pirates.

Sutherland's upper deck gun crews (*pictured below*) let loose with well-aimed walls of steel against fast inshore attack craft.

Impressive though the miniguns and 30mm blazing away are, what you really want to see (and hear) is the crowdpleaser (also known as the 4.5in main gun – *pictured above left in full effect*).

And having confidently dealt with all the horsemen could

throw at them, Sutherland's ship's company were filled, says their Commanding Officer Cdr Roger Readwin, "with a tangible sense of pride".

He added: "Our motto is *sans peur* – without fear – by which HMS Sutherland and her company take great pride.

"The scenarios played out whilst conducting sea training are extremely credible and it takes little imagination to realise what is at stake.

"I have never been more aware that individually we are strong but collectively we represent a formidable force which is able to reassure and protect, in order to maintain peace and security where our future operations takes us."

With new members of the ship's company now fully 'bedded in' following the work-up with Albion, the two ships will be exercising together on the latest Joint Warrior war games off Scotland's west coast before they head off on Cougar.

FOST through the eyes of trainee officers on HMS Albion, page 17

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'Awesome beastie' sighted...



THERE was some sparkle in the Granite City last month as her own warship paid her inaugural visit to Aberdeen.

Brand-new £1bn destroyer HMS Diamond spent a weekend on the north-east coast of Scotland forging ties with one of her two affiliated cities (the other is Coventry, rather trickier to sail into...).

Although some of the ship's company have already started to build links with Aberdeen – and have paid a few visits – the Type 45 destroyer has not.

Trials off the Scottish coast (including some work with the Sea Kings of HMS Gannet) have finally afforded the chance for Diamond herself to drop in on Aberdeen.

The ship made a pitstop at the naval fuel depot at the foot of Loch Striven before conducting some exercises with a Sea King from HMS Gannet (and, perhaps, a little showing off of the 45's impressive manoeuvrability – as evidenced by the photograph taken by LA(Phot) Nick Crusham in the back of the helicopter).

After negotiating Cape Wrath and the Pentland Firth, the destroyer arrived in Aberdeen, where locals haven't had an affiliated warship since HMS Scylla paid off more than 17 years ago. (HMS Archer is based in the city, but she's bound with its universities.)

So to mark the occasion they held a celebratory dinner at the Beach Ballroom for the ship's company.

As for the ship, she opened her upper deck to visitors, allowing the public to see a little of the hi-tech wizardry which makes her Britain's most advanced warship – and to chat to the ship's company without whom that wizardry would count for nought. One visitor described the 8,000-ton warship as "an awesome-looking beastie".

As well as the general public, the ship invited three local Sea Cadet units – TS Scylla, Gowanlea and Bon Accord – on board and staged a capability demonstration (minus firing her main armament obviously...) for Aberdeen's movers and shakers, led by the city's Lord Provost Peter Stephen.

The ship was due to spend four days alongside in Aberdeen port... but the inclement Scottish weather meant her stay was extended by 24 hours.

The ship has now resumed her extensive trials ahead of formally commissioning in Portsmouth in May.



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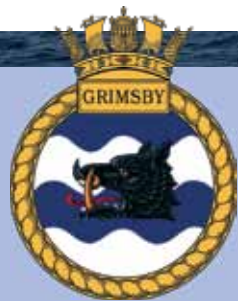
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The boar war(ship)



Greece.....1941
Crete.....1941
Libya.....1941
Arabian Gulf.....2003

Class: Sandown-class mine countermeasures vessel
Pennant number: M108
Builder: Vosper Thornycroft, Woolston
Launched: August 10, 1998
Commissioned: September 25, 1999
Displacement: 450 tons
Length: 172ft (52.5m)
Beam: 34ft (10.5m)
Draught: 7½ft (2.3m)
Speed: 13kt
Complement: 34-40
Propulsion: 2 x Paxman Valenta diesels generating 1,523hp; Voith-Schneider propulsion; 2 x Schottel bow thrusters
Range: 2,500 nautical miles at 12kt
Sensors: Type 2093 mine search and classification sonar
Armament: 1 x 30mm; 1 x Minigun; Seafox mine disposal system

Battle Honours

Facts and figures

NOW if you're named after Britain's most famous fishing port, it's quite obvious what your ship's mascot would be.

That's right, a boar. And you'd obviously pick a suitably 'boarish' name for said beast.

Correct again, Jimmy. Obviously, Jimmy doesn't roam around the decks of HMS Grimsby: (a) it's a tad dangerous for the crew; (b) it's a tad hot in the Gulf.

Jimmy is safely back in the UK – where in the not-too-distant future the minehunter's ship's company will be able to visit him in the flesh (apologies for the very laboured segue...).

The Sandown-class warship is coming to the end of her extended spell in Bahrain (she's been in the small island kingdom since early 2009) and will return to her more traditional home on the Clyde later this year.

Before that 6,000-mile journey there's quite a lot of work to do as part of the RN's sizeable mine warfare presence in the Gulf (two Hunts, two Sandowns).

Grimsby's longstanding presence east of Suez is thanks to a good deal of maintenance in the punishing Gulf environment and the rotation of the entire ship's company every six or seven months.

The latest 'occupants' of M108 are Crew 5 from 1st Mine Countermeasures Squadron, who took over Grimsby from their comrades in Crew 1 in December.

Since then the ship's conducted exercises, enjoyed New Year in Dubai, enjoyed a spot of maintenance alongside at Mina Salman port in Bahrain, hosted senior Canadian politicians

interested in the work of Coalition naval forces in the Gulf, and undertaken a few more exercises.

Grimsby is no stranger to these waters; the current ship earned her sole battle honour as part of the sustained mine clearance effort during the 2003 campaign in Iraq when Saddam Hussein's regime peppered the waters of the northern Gulf with mines.

All three of HMS Grimsby's other battle honours were earned by her predecessor, a sloop built at Devonport in 1933-34.

After service on the China Station initially, the ship was recalled to the UK when war broke out in 1939.

Grimsby was subsequently dispatched to the Mediterranean and saw extensive action in the spring of 1941 when war engulfed the Balkan Peninsula.

The sloop was called upon to escort convoys from Alexandria to Greece... and within weeks was heading in the opposite direction evacuating British troops from first Greece then Crete as German troops overran the shores of the eastern Mediterranean.

Her luck ran out on May 25 1941 off the besieged North African port of Tobruk. Grimsby was ferrying troops and supplies for the garrison when she was sunk by the Luftwaffe just 25 miles from her destination.

As for the ship's mascot, that all stems from the ship's badge – based on the coat of arms of the East Coast port.

Some 400 years ago the mayor and his townsfolk enjoyed the right to hunt wild boar in woods just outside Grimsby.

HEROES OF THE ROYAL NAVY No.83 – Lt Sir Marshall Warmington

IT'S a shame there was no colour film to capture the impressive sight of Norwegian oil tanks burning fiercely in the village of Stamsund.

But this photograph (No. N396 from the archives of the Imperial War Museum) is visible proof of the success of Britain's first major commando raid, Operation Claymore, a 'tip and run' strike at the Lofoten Islands in Norway.

Arching into the Norwegian Sea to the west of Narvik, the island chain was among the most remote outposts of the Nazi empire.

It was here that British warships had sought shelter to lick their wounds after the two battles of Narvik in the spring of 1940.

Nearly 12 months on, two survivors of that battle – HM Ships Eskimo and Bedouin – were at the heart of a force of half a dozen warships and transporters carrying Army commandos and Norwegian volunteers determined to strike a blow at the Hun.

Enemy shipping was sunk, Huns captured and fish oil factories destroyed – and with them tanks containing some 800,000 gallons of oil and glycerine which would have been used by the German armaments industry.

To many of the fledgling commandos, however, the Lofoten Raid was a bit of a disappointment – Jerry didn't put up much of a fight, to the chagrin of the attackers (the sole British casualty was an officer who accidentally shot himself with his revolver).

But in the late winter of 1941, the Lofoten raiders enjoyed their brief moment in the spotlight.

One junior officer dashed off a telegram from Stamsund, 'A Hitler, Berlin': "You said in your last speech German troops would meet the British wherever



photographic memories

they landed. Where are your troops?"

Lord Lovat (as in lovat green and the legendary commando leader on D-Day) took a bus to a nearby Luftwaffe seaplane base and captured the staff; its miffed commander vowed to report Lovat's 'unmilitary' behaviour to Hitler.

For the newsreels there were the edifying sights of oil tanks blazing, German troops

and sailors being captured, Norwegian collaborators (Quislings) being rounded up, and more than 300 locals being rescued from Nazi enslavement. All in all, a jolly good show.

What the Pathé cameras did not show their audience was the real triumph of the Lofoten Raid: the seizing of rotor wheels and code books of an Enigma machine in pretty much the last action of this 'tip and run' raid.

In the opening minutes of the landing the destroyer HMS Somali had encountered the German armed trawler Krebs which had the temerity to offer (brief) resistance before the destroyer's guns knocked out half the crew and sent the vessel drifting towards rocks, where she grounded.

With the raid completed and the task force about to withdraw, Krebs had refloated

and was drifting.

Rather than sink the trawler, the grandly-titled Sir Marshall George Clitheroe Warmington, 3rd Baronet and, more importantly in this instance, Lieutenant RN and signals officer aboard Somali, suggested boarding her.

Warmington – a dozen years in the Navy, half of them in the world of signals and intelligence – and two shipmates climbed

into one of the Norwegian fishing boats clustered around the destroyer (in the brief skirmish with the Germans earlier in the day, Somali had dropped a depth charge which had achieved little except bring scores of dead fish to the surface) and sailed across to the Krebs.

What the Somali's guns had not wrecked, the trawler's few surviving crew – now cowering on deck, one of them waving a white flag – had.

But the Germans had not destroyed everything. Stepping over the bodies of the skipper and two crew in the wheelhouse, Marshall Warmington made for the captain's cabin, where he found a locked drawer.

The junior officer drew his pistol and fired. The bullet shattered the lock... then bounced around the room narrowly missing him.

Inside the drawer, Warmington found a couple of discs – rotor wheels for the Germans' Enigma encoding machine. At the same time his comrades gathered up bundles of papers and documents, then returned to Somali; the destroyer's captain was keen to leave, fearing the Luftwaffe would attack.

Two days later the Lofoten raiding force was back in Scapa Flow. Within a week, Warmington's discs and the papers his party had seized were at Bletchley Park, home of the codebreakers.

The documents in particular proved vital – among them the settings for the cipher machine, allowing the cryptographers to read all German radio traffic for February 1941.

Another piece of the tortuous Enigma jigsaw had slotted into place.

■ THIS photograph – and 9,999,999 others from a century of war and peace – can be viewed or purchased at www.iwmcollections.org.uk, by emailing photos@IWM.org.uk, or by phoning 0207 416 5333.

Redundancy – how generous is the package?

THE fallout from the Strategic Defence and Security Review has ensured that there will probably be at least three tranches of redundancy in the next three years, possibly four.

Lt Cdr David Marsh from the Forces Pension Society examines the packages on offer for those who either volunteer or are compulsorily made to leave the Royal Navy prematurely.

Now that there are two pension schemes (three if you include the RNR) in place, matters are not quite as simple as was the case in previous redundancy rounds.

The simplest way to look at the issue is to view the two schemes separately, and I will start with the AFPS 75 scheme.

Pension: To be entitled to an immediate pension of exit everybody must complete at least 18 years' reckonable service, unless you are an officer who has passed the 16 year point (who would be entitled to a pension on exit anyway).

Those who have completed less than this requirement, but at least two years' reckonable service, will still remain entitled to a Preserved Pension and Gratuity payable at age 60/65 (portion of service up to April 5 2006 payable at 60; portion of service from April 6 2006 to exit date payable at 65).

Resettlement Grant: Ratings who have completed at least 12 years' reckonable service, but not as much as 18 years, will be entitled to receive a Resettlement Grant. This is currently worth £10,038.

Similarly officers who have completed at least nine years' reckonable service, but not as much as 16 years, will also be entitled to receive a Resettlement Grant; the value for an officer is currently £14,686.

Special Capital Payment: Those who receive an immediate pension and gratuity at the point of their redundancy exit point will receive a Special Capital Payments under the following terms:

- Three years or more

remaining on their current commission/engagement – nine months' salary.

- Two to three years remaining on their current commission/engagement – six months' salary.

- One to two years remaining on their current commission/engagement – three months' salary.

- Less than one year remaining on their current commission/engagement – pro-rata of three months' salary (eg six months equals one and a half months' salary).

Those who will not receive an immediate pension and gratuity at the point of their redundancy exit, but had they completed their current commission/engagement would have left the Service with an immediate pension on exit, will receive one and a half months' salary for each year of redundancy reckonable service (service from age 18 – ratings and officers).

Those who, had they completed their current commission/engagement, would have left the Service without an immediate pension on exit receive the lower of the following options:

- One and a half months' salary for each year of redundancy reckonable service; or

- One and a half months' salary for each year by which redundancy has shortened the commitment to further service – plus one and a half months' salary.

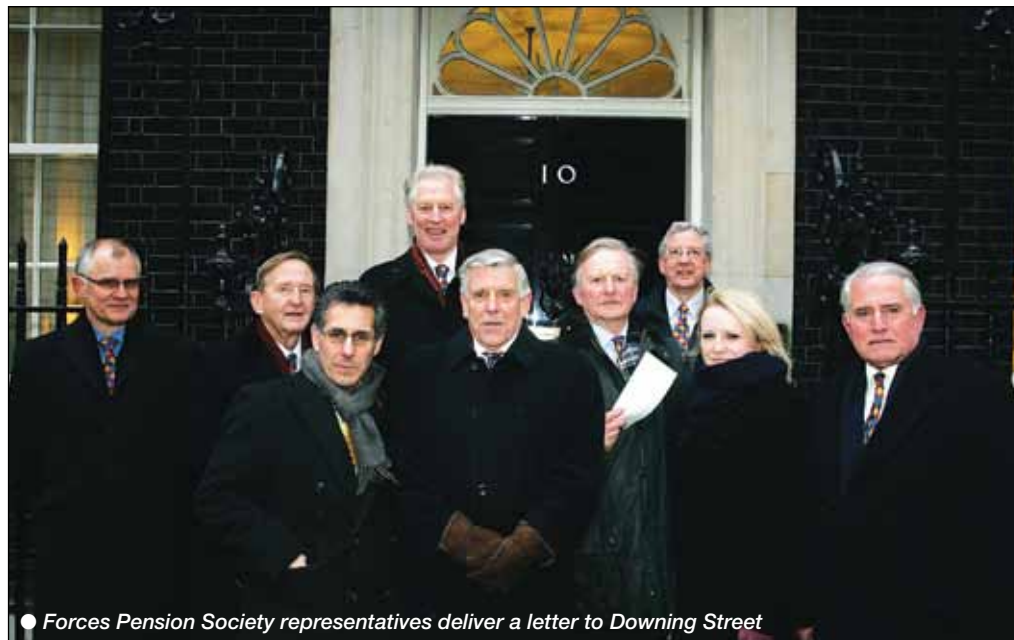
Now let's look at the AFPS05 scheme.

Pensions and Early Departure Payments (EDP)

- To be awarded a full pension immediately on exit an individual must be aged 55 or over

- To be eligible for a lump sum and income stream under the EDP system one must have completed at least 18 years' qualifying service and be aged 40 or under age 55 on the date of exit.

- Those who leave with at least two years' qualifying service, and under age 55, will be awarded a Preserved Pension and tax free Lump Sum, normally payable at



● Forces Pension Society representatives deliver a letter to Downing Street

age 65. These awards can be put into payment as early as age 55, but the value of the pension is reduced by around five per cent for each year earlier than 65 that it comes into payment, and the lump sum is reduced by three per cent for each year earlier than 65 that it is paid.

Resettlement Grant

Officers and ratings who have completed at least 12 years' qualifying service on their final date, will be entitled to receive a tax free Resettlement Grant; this is currently worth £10,302.

Compensation Lump Sum

There are two types of Service commitments that are relevant to the award of a Compensation Lump Sum (CLS):

- Long Service Commitment (where completion of an individual's current commitment would have taken them beyond age 40 with at least 18 years' qualifying service, or beyond age 55 with at least 18 years' qualifying service).

- Short Service Commitment (where completion of an individual's current commitment would have meant that they would have exited the Services before age 40, or before age 55 but with less than 18 years' qualifying service).

Both types of commitment are broken down into whether they are an Early Leaver or a Late Leaver.

Long Service Commitment

Early Leaver is an individual who leaves under redundancy terms before reaching age 55 or the EDP 18/40 point; they will receive a CLS of either:

- If they have completed less than 18 years' qualifying service 1/8th of their final pensionable salary for each complete year of qualifying service completed (part years count on a proportionate basis); or

- If they have completed 18 years' qualifying service, but leave before their 40th birthday, the CLS is limited to 18 times 1/8th of final pensionable salary.

Late Leaver is an individual

who leaves having completed sufficient qualifying service for the award of an EDP Income Stream and Lump Sum on exit will receive a CLS calculated in relation to the uncompleted period of committed service, in one of the following three manners:

- At least four years' Uncompleted Service

One years' final pensionable salary (unless the individual has already completed 40 years' qualifying service – see (c) below)

- Less than four years' Uncompleted Service

Quarter of a years' final pensionable salary for each complete year remaining (part years are awarded proportionately) (unless the individual has already completed 40 years' qualifying service – see (c) below).

- Already completed at least 40 years' Qualifying Service

CLS is calculated in similar fashion to (a) and (b) above, however, where the portion of uncompleted service is two years



FIGHTING FOR THE FORCES AND THEIR FAMILIES

or more, the CLS is restricted to six months' final pensionable salary.

Short Service Commitment

A person serving on a short service commitment shall receive a CLS based on the lesser of the following:

- 1/8th of final pensionable salary for each completed qualifying years' service (part years are paid proportionately)

- 1/8th of final pensionable salary for each uncompleted qualifying years' service (part years are paid proportionately) plus 1/8th of final pensionable salary.

This is quite a complex issue and if you are considering applying for voluntary redundancy, you might think it prudent to obtain a forecast of your potential redundancy benefits first, before committing yourself to a possible early exit from the Royal Navy.

If you are struggling with the maths, and are a member of the Forces Pension Society, you can email the Society's help desk and they will provide you with your calculation. Membership can be obtained through the Society's website at www.forcespensionsociety.org

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There's never been a more important time to join the Forces Pension Society



Rarely has the influence of the Forces Pension Society been more important. As the independent organisation campaigning for fairness in Armed Forces pensions, we are using the leverage of our 40,000+ Members to argue that the proposed change in indexation (from RPI to CPI) flies in the face of the Military Covenant and the unique nature of military service.

The impact of the change will be to devalue Armed Forces pensions by an average of 15%. For example, a 40 year old Sergeant by age 85 will see his pension reduced by £12,000; a Major will lose £319,000.

Although the need for Government spending reductions is understood, there is arguably a legitimate expectation among the Armed Forces for fair treatment in line with the unique nature of their work and of the promise clearly stated in MOD pension brochures that "pensions will be increased every year in line with the Retail Prices Index".



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Red hot metal

NOW that's just showing off...

But then, when you're making your very first appearance east of Suez, why not celebrate?

Of course, this impressive demonstration by Mk8 Lynx 'Charger' of 815 Naval Air Squadron isn't for show. It's a test of the helicopter's defensive aid suite – a vital piece of kit for any Lynx or Merlin deploying to the other side of the great man-made waterway.

The Lynx is no stranger to these waters, but its steed is. Never before has HMS Iron Duke ventured 'somewhere east of Suez' – despite a proud career stretching back two decades.

Well, not this Iron Duke. Her forbear, the very first Iron Duke (an 1870 ironclad), was reportedly the first capital ship to pass through the then-new Suez Canal in 1871 as she made her way to the China Station.

Her 21st Century successor won't be going much beyond 64°E as she takes over as Britain's Gulf patrol ship from HMS Cumberland.

These are strange waters for Iron Duke (if not her crew – few are the sailors who have not deployed to the Gulf) as structural issues with the ship have meant she's been confined to Atlantic and Caribbean waters for the past two decades.

But with those finally resolved, she could finally make for waters which have become the Type 23's typical stomping ground.

"Having never been east of Suez, the ship had to fit – and prove – in just a few months all the enhancements and upgrades that other 23s have accumulated over the last ten years," explained her weapon engineer officer Lt Cdr Martin Hoather.

"Coming on top of normal deployment preparations, we had a pretty intense time, but there was huge satisfaction in sailing on time with all systems ready to go."

After a brief stop in Gib (the ship's first foreign run ashore in more than 12 months) the frigate made for Souda Bay in Crete and the NATO ranges used to test communications, sensors and weapons before passing through Suez.

As well as thoroughly testing that kit, they were inspected by Commodore Portsmouth Flotilla, Cdre Rupert Wallace.

He found the Iron Ducks possessed by "clear enthusiasm" and "a strong sense of readiness for entry into theatre".

In recent years, passage through Suez has become a more tense affair thanks to the global security situation: ships are closed up, the upper deck guns are manned, the Gully-Gully man is a thing of the past.

There was additional tension for Iron Duke; she sailed through the canal as civil unrest gripped Egypt's urban centres.

As it was, the transit was uneventful. Uneventful on the upper decks that is.

Down below the ship's company were partaking in the 'row the Suez' challenge (as much a part of RN sporting activities these days as the Rock Race... which Iron Duke also completed in Gib).

Just under half the ship's company climbed on a Concept 2 rowing machine and pulled at the 'oars' for 2,000 metres each, completing the 162km (100 mile) journey in a little over 11 hours.

Once through Suez, warships are in an operational theatre whose complexity is matched by its scale.

If you think that the Gulf is 'just around the corner' once you're through Suez, think again. It's a 4,000-mile journey from the canal's exit to the tip of the Gulf – roughly the equivalent of sailing from Portsmouth to Florida.

It's here too that counter-piracy/terrorism/smuggling operations begin in earnest.

"We've had a busy start to the deployment transiting into areas, but now we are settling down as we wait for our first big bust," said LS(AWT) Jason Rogers.

Shipmate Ch 'Shacks' O'Neill added: "Being in the boarding team has been great, it breaks up the routine and brings in something different."

Such comments capture the "tangible anticipation" on board Iron Duke according to her Commanding Officer Cdr Nick Cooke-Priest.

He added: "Whilst many of my ship's company have deployed to the region before, Iron Duke and a significant number on board have not."

"We are perfectly matched to the likely tasks and operations we will undertake, and we are confident of making a worthy contribution to security and stability in the region."

These troubled waters are certainly not the place you'd wish to suffer serious facial injuries requiring urgent medical treatment... as befell a fisherman.

He was knocked unconscious and left with nasty wounds when a loose wire struck him in the face aboard the Korean fishing vessel MV Golden Lake in the Gulf of Oman.

The nearest vessel in a position to offer aid was the Type 23... but she was still 170 miles away. The frigate put her foot down and once within range, the ship's doctor Surg Lt Mike Robinson was put on board the Golden Lake courtesy of the sea boat.

He stabilised the casualty sufficiently for the fishing vessel to continue on its way to the nearest port where the injured fisherman could receive more permanent care.

After further operations in the Arabian Sea, Iron Duke took over as the Operation Telic frigate from HMS Cumberland.

The two ships met off Oman for a morning of briefings and exchange of equipment, before Cumberland conducted a sail past as the departing vessel (pictured below – and see opposite).

After the handover, Iron Duke linked up with other Coalition warships for an operation deliberately targeting suspected drug-runners, Operation Scimitar Oryx, before passing through the Strait of Hormuz to assume Gulf duties.



pictures: la(phot) james crawford, frpu west



At the going down of the sun

THIS is how heroes should bow out.

Riding into the sunset.

With the sun beginning its downward journey over the Gulf of Oman, Her Majesty's Ships Cumberland and Cornwall sail in company.

It is a sight never to be repeated.

Never again will two Type 22 frigates work together on operations – in this case safeguarding the troubled waters east of Suez.

Both are conducting their final deployments: the Fighting Sausage initially in the Gulf, now outside it; Cornwall as the flagship of Combined Task Force 151 keeping pirates under the thumb off the Horn of Africa.

All four remaining 22s – a class which has served with distinction since the late 1970s – were culled under last year's defence review: HMS Chatham has already paid off (*see page 19*); Campbeltown is due to decommission imminently.

For one day the two operational 22s joined forces in the Gulf of Oman against the ever-present threat of piracy in the busy shipping lanes between Somalia and the coasts of Iran and Pakistan.

There was still time for a brief break from operations for this last, historic photo opportunity to produce some iconic imagery for the respective ship's companies.

"Both of these ships have served our country well over more than 20 years in service,"

said Capt Steve Dainton who is, understandably, "extremely proud" to be Cumberland's final Commanding Officer.

"In the case of Cumberland, she has served her country magnificently throughout her 22 years in service. It is a fitting tribute that her final deployment has been such a success.

"The name 'Cumberland' has been in use almost continuously for RN warships since 1695, with this ship being the sixteenth to bear the name: she has a proud lineage. So I hope that, in time, there will be another HMS Cumberland.

"In the meantime, we continue to focus on the task in hand before we return to the UK in the spring.

"The pirates are very active and an increasing threat: never has our job out here been more important to UK energy and trade interests in the region."

His words were underscored by HMS Cornwall just hours after the two frigates parted company when the Fighting 99 snared a 'pirate action group' and released five hostages (*see page 5*).

As for F85, nothing quite that dramatic.

But that's not to say her four-plus months east of Suez have been dull.

Really rather varied actually, from patrolling the Iraqi oil platforms and escorting French flagship FS Charles de Gaulle

to supporting the Queen's visit to Abu Dhabi and hosting the new ruler of Ras Al Khaimah.

Cumberland was sent east of Suez as the latest ship engaged on Operation Telic duties (safeguarding those oil terminals – although the remit has become much wider as the Iraqi Navy increasingly takes over duties).

The Telic baton was handed to Iron Duke (*see opposite*). Beyond the traditional formal exchanges and sharing of kit and information, the two frigates blasted jets of water from fire hoses at each other in appreciation. A few enterprising Cumberlanders also raised a 'Good luck Iron Duck' banner...

Although Gulf duties were now a thing of the past, there was no thought of home just yet for the Fighting Sausage.

No Royal Navy vessel ever sails from A to B any more. It's all about maritime security operations – particularly pertinent in the Gulfs of Oman and Aden.

Hence Cumberland slotted into operations by the Combined Maritime Forces (the US-RN Navy led umbrella organisation for task force operations east of Suez, patrolling 2.5 million miles of ocean with three dozen warships from two dozen nations).

"We still have a job to do," Capt Dainton stressed. "We will continue to conduct Maritime



Security Operations right up to the point where we enter Devonport with our decommissioning pennant flying."

Which, sadly, isn't especially long off now.

Hand-in-hand with running a cutting edge warship on demanding operations in a challenging theatre (and east of Suez is officially an

operational theatre), and looking after her 280 men and women comes the solemn task of planning the ship's farewell.

Cumberland will enjoy a long goodbye: three days in May have been set aside to officially bid farewell to the ship in Devonport.

May 24 sees a reception for former officers; the next day the Type 22 hosts a reception for former ship's company and affiliates and dinner for previous

commanding officers.

The last act comes at 2pm on Thursday May 26 when the ship holds her decommissioning ceremony.

Serving personnel can find details, including ticket prices, in RNTM 22/11.

Tickets for eligible personnel are available from S/Lt Josh Gorst, the frigate's deputy logistics officer, at 261-dlo@a.dii.mod.uk.

Pictures: LA(Phot) Jay Allen, FRPU East



● Cumberland's flight deck team take advantage of the 'metal beach' while their Lynx is airborne for the final encounter at sea with HMS Cornwall

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The gentle touch of command

IN AN iPod, iPad, iPhone world, perhaps it was inevitable.

The Fleet Air Arm too is going touch screen.

This is the command console for the next-generation Merlin – featuring next-generation controls.

Where a decade or so ago tracker balls and keyboards were a leap forward, now it's touch-screen displays, a 24in multi-colour monitor – and a new secondary display – to track targets as the helicopter goes a-hunting.

The new mission command system is just one of the changes sweeping through the Merlin force as 30 Mk1 aircraft are turned into Mk2s by defence giants Lockheed Martin and AgustaWestland in a £750m upgrade.

Outwardly, the Mk2 is pretty much identical to the Mk1 which has been in service with the Royal Navy for more than a decade.

But in the ever-changing worlds of warfare and technology what was state of the art in 2000 can look like state of the Ark in 2010.

In particular the revamped Merlin will be better able to deal with submarine operations closer to shore, rather than the deep oceans which have been the traditional domain of anti-submarine warfare.

In addition to the leaps in technology between the Mk1 and Mk2, the new variant is seen as a much more versatile helicopter.

That's not to say the current aircraft is a 'one-trick pony' – it's being used on sorties which go far

beyond its original anti-submarine warfare mission, notably the concerted counter-piracy and counter-terrorism mission in the Gulf and Indian Ocean.

The Mk2 is being beefed up to meet the demands of that east of Suez role – improved night vision goggles and fast roping kit for Royal Marine boarding teams, and an M3M machine-gun. It's also receiving improved radar to better track inshore targets for surface, rather than sub-surface, roles.

The second generation Merlin is also expected to carry up to 16 troops or 12 casualties by stripping out the consoles and standard weapon systems and replacing them with seats or stretchers, depending on the mission. For Search and Rescue sorties, a new location system is being fitted.

The first prototype Mk2 flew in Yeovil at the tail end of last year; a second trials version is now airborne and two more will be in the skies of Somerset in a matter of weeks.

The quartet will spend the rest of the year undergoing thorough flight trials around Yeovil before being handed over to the experts at Boscombe Down to evaluate the new mission systems next year. In all, the four new Merlins will undergo around 750 hours of testing in UK skies over the next two and a half years.

The Mk2 will be fully operation and in front-line service with 814, 820, 824 and 829 Naval Air Squadrons by the end of 2014.

Picture: Lockheed Martin



Last man in Basra

WELL obviously not the last man in Basra, because that would make it a very strange place...

...but in a city for which Britons have sacrificed so much blood, sweat and tears over the past decade, Lt Cdr Mike Jones-Thompson is not only the last British sailor, but the last British Serviceman in Iraq's second city.

Having captured Basra from Saddam Hussein's forces back in 2003 – thanks in no small part to 3 Commando Brigade's assault on the Al Faw peninsula and crucial air support from Fleet Air Arm helicopters – the city became the centre of British efforts to stabilise southern Iraq for the next half-dozen years.

When the bulk of UK forces pulled out of Iraq nearly two years ago, a residue of Royal Navy personnel was left behind – chiefly training the Iraqi Navy and Marines in Umm Qasr.

And in Basra itself, one liaison officer was assigned to the US Army Division in southern Iraq. Today that officer is the 45-year-old sailor from Portsmouth.

For Brits who've served in Basra, they'll find much has



● Lt Cdr Jones-Thompson in front of the Basra command centre and (above) the naval officer accompanies an Iraqi soldier and Spc Raymond Quintanilla of the US 1st Infantry Division

Pictures: Shane Wilkinson

changed in the eight years since Saddam Hussein was toppled.

Basra airport now operates regular civilian flights (4,000 passengers a month) throughout the Middle East – something it's not done since before the first Gulf War – while the Shatt Al Arab Hotel which served as the HQ of British forces has been turned into the command centre for all Iraq's emergency services and army.

As for the city itself, says Lt Cdr Jones-Thompson, "prosperity and trade are returning, the port has been cleared of all the war debris and there is a feeling from the people that their own destiny is in their hands."

The two oil platforms in the northern Gulf, which have been the focal point for RN operations ever since the 2003 war – and which account for well over 80 per cent of Iraq's wealth – are

bearing fruit.

Infrastructure – bridges, hospitals, port facilities and the like – are being rebuilt or restored under the supervision of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams after decades of neglect under Saddam, and a lot of work has been done to assist the local police force, thanks in no small part to the hotel-turned-headquarters.

"The Joint Operational Centre is at the centre of bringing back normality to the people – since the provincial elections in 2009 the violence has been getting less and less," says Lt Cdr Jones-Thompson.

"It is now at its lowest point and security is no longer the main concern of the Baswarians, this is the lack of continuous electrical power."

And aside from the daily strains of call to prayer drifting across Basra, if you listen carefully you might just hear the Pompey Chimes.

The naval officer is an ardent Portsmouth fan and thanks to the wonders of satellite TV he's even managed to catch a couple of games has tried to encourage the American Army and locally-employed staff to support the Blues and sing their famous anthem...

With thanks to Dennis Barnes.

Marines mark centenary

A CENTURY of Royal Marine aviation will be celebrated in May.

All serving and retired RM aircrew (pilots, observers, air gunners, door gunners and aircrewmembers) and anyone outside the Corps who's flown with the Commando Air Troops, 3 Cdo Bde Air Squadron (3 BAS) or 847 NAS are invited to the dinner in the wardroom of RNAS Yeovilton on May 6.

The following day the air base holds a reunion for 3 BAS personnel and their families.

The events mark the centenary of the first Royal to earn his flying certificate (the trailblazer was one Lt Eugene Gerrard RMLI, who qualified on May 2 1911 – one of the first four Senior Servicemen to volunteer for flying duties).

Details at www.flyingmarines.com

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Dutch rig run

DUTCH sailors practised the art of replenishment at sea with their RN counterparts – without getting their feet wet.

Ten Cloggies (official Jackspeak term for our Dutch brethren – Ed) headed to HMS Raleigh in Torpoint and the establishment's well-used RAS rig.

The rig is used to teach RN and RFA personnel the art of a replenishment at sea – a fundamental operation for any naval force with blue water aspirations.

The Raleigh rig comprises the upper deck of a warship and an auxiliary, roughly 50ft apart, with trainees expected to RAS as they would for real – firing gunlines and the like – transferring stores, fuel, even people (the latter, admittedly, is very rarely used at sea these days).

Dutch sailors regularly make use of Raleigh's facilities – principally its damage control and firefighting school – when their ships are being put through the rigmarole of Operational Sea Training across the water in Devonport.

In this instance seamanship specialists undergoing an eight-month course with a view to promotion in the Royal Netherlands Navy were given RAS training by WO Dave Deakin, Raleigh's seamanship training officer, and his team.

The training the British instructors deliver is the same for all NATO sailors – making it easier for Allied warships to work together – and encompasses the basics of RASing, as well as some of the safety issues the trainees must be aware of.

Picture: Dave Sherfield, HMS Raleigh





Initial here...

SO WHAT'S it like being a rookie officer aboard the nation's flagship in the middle of a Thursday War?

It's not a question we're often asked... but as it has been, luckily we have 50 Officer Cadets from Britannia Royal Naval College Dartmouth on hand to provide the answer.

The rocked up to HMS Albion in Devonport for their first sustained period of life at sea.

Initial Fleet Time introduces cadets to life in an operational warship, serving alongside all members of the ship's company.

They join a warship after 14 weeks' training at the *alma mater* of the officer corps – it can mean slipping into a plush Far East deployment, or joining a task force in the USA such as last summer's Auriga exercises...

...or it can mean 'mini OST'. Off Plymouth. In the middle of winter.

Flagship Albion will be leading this year's key task group deployment, Cougar 11 – an amphibious force exercising in the Mediterranean and east of Suez.

To brush away the cobwebs which have built up since her return from Auriga, some Directed Continuation Training (that 'mini OST') had been lined up for the

assault ship, in company with HMS Sutherland – her escort for Cougar (see page 10).

In fact life aboard Albion began quite gently for the officer cadets from Daring and Dauntless Divisions.

They arrived in Devonport as the ship's company returned from Christmas leave and had two weeks to get to know the 18,000-tonne warship (with three times as many compartments as crew...) before she began that training.

"The overriding theme on Initial Fleet Time is 'get stuck in' and the cadets have certainly done that so far," explained Cdr Paul Murphy, Albion's Commander Logistics.

As for getting stuck in, well the budding officers joined Albion's firefighting teams, handled ropes at harbour stations, hosed down the jetty, played at being casualties for the ship's medics to patch up, assisted night-time replenishments at sea and shadowed the officers of the watch *inter alia*.

"It's a once-in-a-career opportunity for new officers to learn first-hand about life as a sailor as well as what is expected from them when they reach the wardroom," said Albion's XO Cdr Nick Washer.

"DCT has just been an added bonus."

By the time you read this, the cadets will be about to bid farewell to Albion (and hence miss her big deployment) to return to Dartmouth for the final four weeks of Initial Officer Training.

By common consensus the cadets' week with 6 Assault Squadron Royal Marines, Albion's own commando unit, proved by far the most popular of the 'shadowing' tasks they were given.

The fledgling officers worked alongside the Royal Marines as they deployed in their landing craft in testing sea conditions staying out overnight conducting recces, watches and establishing road blocks.

Back onboard the mother ship, cadets attended lectures on the role of Royal Marines in Afghanistan and got hands-on experience with the weaponry and vehicles used by 6ASRM during a beach assault.

And just to keep the OCs on their toes, many of the green berets volunteered to organise regular PT and team building exercises for the young officers.

Accompanying the cadets throughout their ten weeks on Albion are three staff from Dartmouth – including a (shock horror) pongo: Capt Shane Green

of the Mercian Regiment (also Albion's affiliated Army unit) is on exchange at BRNC as a divisional officer.

"It's been very enlightening taking my cadets through their Initial Fleet Time," he said. "I have been learning just as much as them."

"Being on board has been really good so far. The food is great and much better than BRNC [*Shh, don't tell them – Ed*], although the queue is always massive," said OC Henry Marriner, proving the old adage that an army marches on its stomach.

"I've now got used to sleeping in a tiny bed, which is sandwiched in between two other beds and is half way up the wall."

Ah, happy days...

■ With Albion preparing for Cougar, the ship was visited by senior officers, including the man who will lead the force.

The new Commander UK Maritime Forces, Rear Admiral Duncan Potts, and his deputy Cdre Simon Ancona joined the ship to discuss the impending deployment with the ship's command team – as did Cdre John Kingwell, Commander UK Task Group.

The latter and his amphibious staff will move aboard Albion after Easter to direct the deployment.

Pictures: LA(Phot) Luron Wright, HMS Albion



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Sultan showcases pastimes

CLUBS, societies and sports at HMS Sultan set out their stalls to attract new members at the establishment's 'Freshers' Fayre'.

The annual event was held in the Brunel Gym this year, allowing trainees and other personnel to try out the new climbing wall.

Amongst those touting for business were the RN ice hockey squad, the gliding club, war gamers and the Locost car club, as well as the more traditional pastimes such as football, cricket and rugby.

The event raises awareness of the opportunities available to Service and civilian personnel at Sultan and in the wider Portsmouth area, and also acts as a shop window for Navy sports associations.

BFBS in tune

BFBS Radio hopes to find out the Forces' favourite 500 songs to create a bespoke database.

Now they need your votes – name your top three tunes and send your choice via the website www.bfbs.com/forces500 or email forces500@bfbs.com

You can also scribble them on a bluey and post it to Forces 500, BFBS Radio, BFPO 786.

Voting closes on March 25 – and voters could win one of 13 prizes, including an iPad and iPod Nanos, in a grand prize draw.

Navy Museum is up for prize

AN innovative film project has put the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth in the running for the inaugural Clore Award for Museum Learning.

The museum's project, *Face to Face: Documenting experiences of conflict*, sees primary school pupils and veterans exploring the impact of war.

The pupils worked closely with 12 veterans, including those who saw service on Atlantic and Arctic convoys, the

Montrose leads off

HMS MONTROSE'S last deployment was in the sweltering heat of the Somali Basin.

Her next is to the chilly waters of the South Atlantic.

So what better preparation for the transition than a cold late January day at Dartmouth and some exercises to get the mind and body warmed up?

The Type 23 frigate sent teams of potential leading hands for practical leadership exercises in the grounds of Britannia Royal Naval College.

Four main departments – Marine and Weapon Engineering, Warfare and Logistics – were represented as the teams tackled a series of problems, from saving a stricken pilot from a tree surrounded by quicksand to safely moving drums of chemical waste to clear a helicopter landing area.

"We wanted to give our more junior leaders the chance to learn outside of the normal working environment," explained the ship's CO, Cdr Jonathan Lett.

"A day such as we have experienced here is of benefit across all levels with respect to both individual and team development."

If sailors are to progress through the ranks they must complete leadership training to prepare them for the roles and



● A stricken 'pilot' is rescued from a tree surrounded by quicksand (well, that's what the team members in dark blue claim they are doing...)

Picture: Lt Cdr Duncan Humphery (HMS Montrose)

responsibilities expected of them.

PO Adam Cowling, who organised the day, said: "It is good to get out of the ship to discover our strengths and potential weaknesses."

LS Simon Thorne said: "It was so cold, that added an extra challenge for us."

"We were routinely working in

35°C before Christmas – this was quite a shock to the system."

And while Tom Hillman recognised that the day was excellent preparation for his forthcoming leadership course, fellow ET(ME) Tom Stockton "would prefer to do this in the summer months..."

The idea to visit BRNC for

the day came from WEO and Command Leadership and Management sponsor Lt Cdr Mark Jones, who said: "To be able to bring 24 of the ship's company across to the excellent facilities at the College for a bespoke day's training is just brilliant."

A return visit, to try the new High Ropes course, follows soon.

Helping Hans at BRNC

A GROUP of cadets from the German equivalent of Dartmouth have spent two weeks alongside their Royal Navy colleagues.

The 18 from Marineschule Mürwik lived and worked alongside officer cadets at BRNC, joining in both classroom-based work – including a lecture on ship stability – and the Basic Leadership Development exercise for new-entry cadets.

Their second week was fully focused on leadership training as a group, including

three nights camping out to learn the basics of fieldcraft and survival skills, something in which the Germans do not receive training.

And having gone through the discomfort of the 'wet/dry' routine, putting on soaking wet clothes, the visitors were quite pleased to be heading back to Flensburg in northern Germany rather than gearing up for four days on Dartmoor.

On leaving, the visitors presented a book about the centenary of their academy.

RN bangs the drum for tattoo

THE Royal Navy will be strongly represented at this year's Windsor Castle Royal Tattoo.

The event, on the evenings of May 12-15, celebrates the Duke of Edinburgh's 90th birthday – and the Duke is Captain-General of the Royal Marines, who will play a large part in proceedings.

There will also be a special tribute to the Royal Navy's legendary Field Gun competition.

The tattoo will end with a spectacular fireworks display on the Sunday night.

Tickets to the tattoo are now on sale, and ticket holders will also be able to enter the Royal Windsor Horse Show, which takes place at the same venue during the daytime.

The horse show, one of the largest of its kind in the UK, features more than 200 shops and a food and drink festival.

For tickets, priced between £25 and £65, call the box office on 0871 230 5570 or book online at www.windsortattoo.com

Big day out

PORTSMOUTH Historic Dockyard is joining forces with the Spinnaker Tower and Gunwharf Quays shopping centre to offer a Big Day Out for local residents.

For those who can produce evidence that they live in a PO postcode, there will be 50 per cent off the cost of entry to the dockyard and the tower on March 12-13, and special offers and discounts at many restaurants and shops.

Isle of Wight residents will also receive discounted travel across the Solent with Wightlink and Hovertravel.

For more information on the discount weekend see www.portsmouthbigdayout.co.uk

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● The last salute for HMS Chatham as the White Ensign is lowered for the final time and (below) the public packs into Portsmouth's Guildhall Square for a service of thanksgiving for HMS Ark Royal before the ship's company marches past Lord Mayor Cllr Paula Riches (bottom)



A farewell to arms

WITH a flash of fire from her ceremonial gun, HMS Chatham exchanges formalities with Plymouth's Royal Citadel for the final time.

Tugs provide their traditional send-off as the youngest of Britain's last four Type 22 frigates becomes the first to pay off in the wake of October's defence cuts.

It has been a month of goodbyes for the men and women of the Royal Navy. Goodbye to Ark Royal. Goodbye to 800 Naval Air Squadron. Goodbye to Manchester. Goodbye to Chatham.

The history of each is proud and varied, their final acts all different. Different locations. Different weather. Different audiences. But always the same respect and admiration from the public.

HMS Chatham made her final entry into Plymouth, watched by a few score well-wishers on the Devonshire city's seafront who braved bitter conditions to witness the sad occasion.

The last entry – which saw the frigate uphold the RN custom of trailing a long, narrow decommissioning pennant – was the latest act in Chatham's lengthy paying-off process.

She had already said her goodbyes to the city of her birth, Newcastle – the frigate spent four days in North Shields, a few miles along the Tyne from the Swan Hunter yard where Chatham was

built from 1986-89, before joining the Fleet the following year.

After the final entry came the formal act of decommissioning in Devonport Naval Base.

In suitably bleak weather (cold, rain) to mark the solemn occasion, more than 100 guests – friends, families, VIPs, affiliates and dignitaries from Kent – joined the ship's company in bidding farewell.

Among those saying their goodbyes was Admiral Sir Ian Forbes, Chatham's first CO back in 1990 when the frigate was commissioned. He told today's Chathams that back then, the ship was regarded as the most advanced in the world.

As for his final successor in charge of F87, Cdr Simon Huntington, he said his men and women should take pride in Chatham's accomplishments – most recently dealing with the pirate menace off the Horn of Africa.

"Rather than lament the loss of a fine ship, I urge you to celebrate what she has achieved," he stressed.

"In the words of her sponsor Lady Roni Oswald, I know you will find that what Chatham has achieved in the last 20 years is widely admired throughout the Royal Navy.

"She has been an enormously successful, happy and reliable ship throughout this period and wherever you find yourselves

serving next, you can always be extremely proud of what you achieved."

"HMS Chatham will be sadly missed – over the past 20 years she has had a very successful life. As her final commanding officer, she has a special place in my heart."

With the decommissioning cake cut (and devoured), the White Ensign was hauled down for the last time.

But it wasn't quite time to close the book on the Chatham story.

The "last significant event" in her life came on the streets of her namesake town in Kent as bonds stretching back to the late '80s were officially severed.

Just three months after the ship herself paid a final visit to the Medway, more than 60 members of her company returned to exercise their right to the Freedom of the Borough of Medway for the final time.

The freedom parade in Kent – with bayonets fixed and colours flying, all in time to the drum beat of the Royal Marines Band from HMS Collingwood – ended at the Medway Council buildings, where Mayor Cllr David Brake took the salute, then invited the ship's company inside for an official reception for the sailors.

It was an occasion, said Cdr Huntington, "tinged with sadness".

But he added: "I'm certain that many happy memories of this

special bond will remain long after the ship has gone."

RAIN. Manchester. The two go together like fish and chips, bread and butter, Ant and Dec, Laurel and Hardy, Morecambe and Wise.

So it was probably apt that for the final appearance by the men and women of HMS Manchester in their namesake city that it was raining. A lot. Very heavily in fact. "Chuck it down" in Mancunian vernacular.

Being a hardy lot, locals braved the rain and applauded the sailors as they marched through the heart of the city from the Cathedral, where a service of celebration was held for all those who have served in the destroyer since her launch in 1980, to the City Hall, 700 yards away.

There the ship's company paraded around Albert Square as the Lord Mayor of Manchester, Cllr Mark Hackett, took the salute.

"It is with admiration that I say farewell to the ship's crew," he told the damp sailors. "It is important to remember not only the sterling work the current crew have performed but also the achievements of all of HMS Manchester's past crew members. I speak for the city when I say we are all very proud of our association with HMS Manchester."

Accompanied by Territorial Army Bands of the Lancashire Artillery and the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, plus

Continued on page 20

pictures: la(photo) martin carney and jenny lodge, frpu west; la(photo) al macleod, nick crusham and chris mumby, frpu north; po(photo) ray jones and la(photo) abbie gadd, hms ark royal; la(photo) luis holden, 800 nas; and cpl alex scott, raf wittering



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disbanding ceremony, concluding (right) with 800 NAS' last Commanding Officer Cdr David Lindsay leading the

in Leeds, including civic and business leaders, the Royal Armouries, local Sea Cadets and Leeds-based members of the Royal Naval Reserves.

The Leeds-Ark Royal bond goes back to the aftermath of the sinking of the legendary third Ark in 1941.

The good folk of Leeds raised millions of pounds to pay for a replacement and supported the carrier throughout her 25-year career – granting that ship's company Freedom of the City in 1973.

Nearly 40 years and one carrier later, today's Ark Royal marched through Leeds for the last time, led by the Band of HM Royal Marines Scotland, from Leeds City Museum through the centre to the town hall, where Lord Mayor Cllr Jim McKenna took the salute.

"Today is a day of great celebration with the ship's company exercising their Right of Freedom of the City, but one of sadness too with the decommissioning."

"Ark Royal has always had a firm place in the hearts of the people of Leeds."

AMID the formalities, the military tunes, the official speeches, it was a spontaneous act which provided the enduring memory of the day.

With the strains of *Auld Lang Syne* from the RAF Cranwell Band filling the cavernous hangar at RAF Wittering, Cdr David Lindsay led the Colour Party of his 800 Naval Air Squadron – the Fleet Air Arm's last fast jet squadron in this era – past the ranking officers of the Senior and Junior Services and saluted.

A couple of guests in the 600-strong audience stood up and applauded.

It set off a domino effect, a Mexican Wave – or more accurately, 'Mexican Clap' – as in a flash friends, family and veterans rose from their seats to a man, woman and child and showed their appreciation for the deeds of Joint Force Harrier.

Their applause, said Cdr Lindsay, "left a lump in my throat – it shows what a significant day this is".

The aircraft he flew for two decades has already passed into history. The fabled jump jet took its final bow (literally, thanks to its unique abilities)

shortly before Christmas.

Proceedings at Wittering – which proudly called itself 'Home of the Harrier' for more than 40 years – were focused on the decommissioning (or disbanding in RAF terminology) of Britain's three squadrons: 800 NAS and 1(F) and IV(R) RAF Sqns.

The trio made up Joint Force Harrier, the combined jump jet unit which saw the Fleet Air Arm drop the Sea Harrier in favour of the ground-attack bomber flown by the RAF and decamp from its native Somerset for RAFs Wittering and Cottesmore in eastern England.

As a joint force, the decommissioning ceremony highlighted the similarities – and differences – between the two forces.

800 and 1(F) are largely homogeneous dark blue/light blue squadrons respectively; IV(R), however, is a mix of Navy and RAF ground and aircrew.

The RAF Band plays marches largely unfamiliar to Naval audiences (*The Longest Day*, *633 Squadron*) – but they did strike up *Heart of Oak* at the ceremony's end.

The RAF Guard of Honour wear white gloves, their Fleet Air Arm counterparts do not (and probably regretted that fact on a bitter winter's day) – but the sailors do wear white puttees.

And while the sailors march behind the White Ensign, the RAF follow their individual squadron standards which were laid up in a nearby church after proceedings, the Royal Navy's flag is eternal.

After inspecting at length the 150 personnel on parade – 50 from each squadron – the head of the RAF, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Dalton, and First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope thanked the squadrons for their commitment, dedication and, in times of war, blood shed for their nation.

The men and women of all three formations, said Air Chief Marshal Dalton, had given "distinguished and gallant service" and made "an outstanding contribution to the history of three iconic squadrons."

Both RAF squadrons trace their

history back beyond the birth of the Air Force and even WW1; they were formed in 1912. 800 NAS has served in three incarnations since the 1930s.

And as three of the most celebrated, most honoured, most battle-proven squadrons in the history of aviation, all three would re-form one day, Air Chief Marshal Dalton said.

"It is only adieu, not goodbye."

Most recently, all three squadrons have taken it in turns to support the Allied effort in Afghanistan.

In that last theatre, Admiral Stanhope told the personnel of 800 Naval Air Squadron, its men and women had "carried the torch for the generations of naval aviators that came before you."

"Not once have you let them, or us, down."

The admiral said the decision to pay off the Harrier force "was one not taken lightly or easily. It has been a painful one for a close-knit community which has given outstanding service over very many years."

"But we have to move on. The implications reach far beyond the Harrier community. The challenge we now face is to recreate carrier strike capability which for so long has been – and will again be – at the heart of the future forces which will safeguard our country."

"That is not only your future, but also your legacy."

The immediate future for the 800 NAS personnel – the squadron was still 100 strong on the day of its decommissioning – is to prepare their aircraft for storage and keep the flame of carrier aviation burning until the future carriers and Joint Strike Fighter arrive in a decade's time.

"This is the end of an era of hard sacrifice, some of it in blood," said Cdr Lindsay.

"We have to take that legacy and move on into the future. I am a born optimist. Hopefully we will recommit as the first squadron flying the Joint Strike Fighter."

"It has been the greatest privilege of my life to be the commanding officer of the last Harrier squadron in the Fleet Air Arm."



in Lancashire (l-r) forming up near the Printworks (wet); past the Printworks (still wet); along Corporation Street



Commandos



THERE was a whiff of optimism as the Royal Marines of 3 Cdo stepped closer to deploying to Afghanistan.

There was also the whiff of food demonstrating the depth of training difficulties faced in making that

The fighting formation, spearheaded by 42 Cdo and 45 Cdo, as well as support units from the Army's 7th Armoured Brigade, had come together at Copehill Down village near Warminster for Exercise Pashtun Jaguar, with all three Services also chipping in with aircraft.

It was the first time that the next task Force Helmand, led by HQ 3 Cdo Brigade, came together to put the lessons of 18 months of training into practice.

As *Navy News* went to press, the first elements of Herrick 14 were preparing to fly out to theatre, paving the way to the formal handover from 16 Air Assault Brigade.

At the heart of the day's proceedings was a meeting or *shura* with the leaders of a village in Afghanistan.

The assembled onlookers, including national and local TV reporters, were briefed on what they were about to see, as well as the conditions which the Royals will face when they return to the Middle East.

As the observers tried to thaw out, senior officers talked of temperatures of 50°C over the summer – their audience would have settled for 50°F as the mercury rested just above zero and a bitter east wind whipped off Salisbury Plain.

The military 'dynamic display' was brief and eye-catching.

An RAF Tornado screamed overhead and Army Apache gunships prowled the perimeters of the 'village' – a collection of Germanic-looking houses standing in for Afghanistan as easily as they have done for the Balkans and other flashpoints around the world.

With air cover established, a Jungle Sea King led in a Chinook, and a combined patrol of RN sailors and Afghan National Army hopped out and made ready to move off.

An RAF Hercules dropped supplies by parachute – one option is for foot patrols to be sustained in the field by drops from such aircraft, allowing them greater time with the locals.

Then the troops are told of suspicious activity in the village, which is made up of various buildings of vaguely central European appearance and which are used to train troops in the art of FIBUA (Fighting In Built-Up Areas, otherwise known as FISHing, or Fighting In Someone's House).

As commandos watch carefully, two Royals from J Coy, 42 Cdo, settle down to the shura, in a draughty barn, the smoke and steam from cooking pots wafting into their dimly-lit huddle.

The roles of Afghan villagers are played by... Afghans, who help create a realistic patina to proceedings.

The dynamic display by this time had turned into something of a show, with various Army units demonstrating their skills and equipment.

The Royals will head to Afghanistan



● This page, from top: A Royal Navy Jungle Sea King drops a patrol from Salisbury Plain; members of the patrol move into Copehill Down village; gather for a shura while a woman minds a cooking pot; a Jackal fire support vehicle in Copehill Down village. Opposite page, from top: a Royal Navy Sea King in an RAF Chinook to drop a patrol on the outskirts of Copehill Down village; a member of the patrol training for his first deployment to Afghanistan; a member of the patrol carefully through the village

Pictures: LA (Phot) Dave Gallagher, FRPU(E); SSgt Ian Houlding, Royal Marines; Graeme Main, S



in plain view

m in the air of Salisbury Plain
ommando Brigade moved a
fghanistan.

, and the hint of snow, in the air,
given to the troops as well as the
training as realistic as possible.

as a fighting force, but there is a sense
that the country they are going to –
or returning to, in many cases – for
Herrick 14 is a different place from
the one they left in the spring of
2009, on Herrick 9.

From the commander right down
to the troops on the ground,
there is optimism that things
are improving, and that the
role of the Royals will be to
help Afghanistan along the
path to stability, although
they are prepared to fight
when they have to – hence
the ‘mission-specific training’ on
icy Salisbury Plain and earlier in
Norfolk, as featured in February’s
Navy News.

That doesn’t mean charging about
and loosing off thousands of rounds
of ammunition; we all know Royal
Marines are as good as they come in
terms of warfighting, and they have been
practising hard at that.

No, it also means taking into account
cultural factors, language, customs and
so on, hence the field training exercise
on Salisbury Plain, and the optimism
that permeates the entire brigade as
they count down the days to arrival in
Lashkar Gah as party of Task Force
Helmand.

Brigade Commander Brig Ed Davis
said: “There are 6,500 men and women
from across the Services who will be
deploying to Helmand in April.

“The vast bulk and the core of
Task Group Helmand come from 3
Commando Brigade Royal Marines, and
this will be our fourth deployment to
Afghanistan – the first brigade to do
that.”

The Brigadier said the force would
be working closely with other nations
beside local Afghan groups, including
Americans, Danes and Estonians.

“We have to set the conditions for the
transfer of security responsibility from
Task Force Helmand and ISAF [the
International Security Assistance Force]
to the Afghan national authorities.

“We will be very lucky in the fact that
we will be inheriting an area of operations
which is showing tangible progress and
has done so over the past few months,
building on the work and sacrifices of
previous brigades since 2006.

“We will be going with our eyes wide
open to threat to that process, which is
fragile and reversible. That is why we will
be ready to meet those challenges.

“The training we have gone through
has been second-to-none.

“It has been subjected to constant
improvement since 2006 – there has
been lots of investment and lots of
sophisticated processes to make sure
the lessons that have been learnt on the
battlefield are being transferred into the
training that we have gone through.”

Brig Davis acknowledged that the
brigade’s first summer deployment
to Afghanistan would bring climatic
challenges – carrying 70lb of equipment

in 50°C heat is no mean feat – but he
said the old idea of winter down-time
and a summer fighting season had not
been true for some time.

Amongst those visiting Copehill
Down was Defence Secretary Dr Liam
Fox, who talked to personnel from
the brigade, which includes elements
of the Commando Logistic Regiment,
845, 846, 847, 857 and 854 Naval Air
Squadrons, medical staff and a tranche
of maritime reservists.

Brig Davis also talked of identifying and
protecting communities in Afghanistan,
engaging with the elders and “finding
out what they want, not what we want.”

Hence the *shura* in the barn, at which
Lt Ollie Augustine RM and Mne Chris
Gell, of J Coy 42 Cdo, sat down with
the elders of Copehill Down, the officer
discussing issues and the marine taking
notes.

This will be Mne Gell’s first
deployment to Afghanistan, but he has
no major concerns.

“I am fine about going,” he said.

“I am looking forward to getting out
there and doing what I joined to do. It is
what I have been trained to do.

“The training has been good – and it is
better to make the mistakes now...”

Chris’s colleague Mne Mike Chapman,
also a member of the Fire Support
Group, was out on Herrick 9 with 42
Cdo, and believes his second deployment
to Helmand will be somewhat different
to the first, back in 2008-09.

“Last time we went out we were doing
strike ops out into rural areas, and the
locals might not have much confidence
in you,” he said.

“We just got the job done and got out.
We were quite divided from them.

“But a lot of them, when you get to
know them, can have a bit of banter
with you.

“From what I hear from my mate who
was with 40 Cdo on Herrick 12 [summer
2010] they said they are getting to grips
with the locals now.

“They come up to you and give you
pointers. They can see you are making a
difference.”

With training providing an insight into
the Afghan culture – as well as giving the
Royals courses in the Pashtu language
– there is a sense that the gap between
‘them and us’ is shrinking.

Dr Fox said: “I am always impressed
by the standard of training and the level
of preparation of our Armed Forces and
today is no exception.

“3 Commando Brigade are
exceptionally well prepared for the tasks
they will undertake.

“They are already well used to working
with troops from other forces, including
Afghan personnel with whom they will
be working very closely as we prepare to
hand over responsibility for the security
of Afghanistan to its own government.

“I wish them well on Operation Herrick
14 and thank them for the service they
do for this country and the contribution
they will make to our security at home as
they improve security in Afghanistan.”

Following this training, many of those
due to deploy will be taking pre-tour
leave while elements of the 3 Cdo Brigade
Headquarters staff will travel to the
United States to make final preparations
with the Americans.



n 42 Cdo RM
village elders
vehicle parked
Jungle leads
ge; Mne Chris
works his way

Logistic Corps;
soldier magazine



Altitude sickness

CREWS from the Royal Navy's Commando Helicopter Force (CHF) used Exercise Pashtun Jaguar on Salisbury Plain to put the finishing touches to their training for operations in Afghanistan.

Aircrew from 845 and 846 Naval Air Squadrons of the CHF, known as the Junglies, spent three weeks flying their Sea King Mk4 helicopters above Salisbury Plain in the final phase of their pre-deployment training before heading out to Helmand.

Pashtun Jaguar was a combined exercise supporting the Royal Marines of 3 Commando Brigade, allowing aircrew and soldiers alike to prepare for operations in Afghanistan.

Operating with helicopters from the RAF and Army Air Corps, there were a variety of tasks for the venerable Sea Kings.

These included a slick demonstration of the aircraft's capabilities and roles, showing the watching media how different aircraft types combine to insert troops.

Lt Cemal Oram, of 845 NAS, said: "This will be my first tour of Helmand so working alongside aircraft from the other two Services gave the opportunity to increase my experience of operating in a joint environment."

The exercise also contained an element of what is known as 'judgemental training'.

Military instructors acted as insurgents, using authentic clothes, weapons and vehicles.

They set ambushes, lay simulated improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and mingled in Afghan dress at village

meetings or shuras.

When aircraft approached the landing site the crews were tested on how they would respond to these threats, and afterwards watched the gunship tapes and were debriefed on the course of action taken.

Lt Oram explained: "This is designed to help minimise unnecessary casualties to the Afghan population when we are on operations."

"Essentially it is about making sure the crews understand what they can and can't do under the rules of engagement."

"If a potential threat is seen we ask whether it is safe, correct and prudent to engage with the enemy."

A Flight of 845 NAS were due to deploy to Helmand for three months as Navy

News went to press, where they will put into practice the skills honed on Salisbury Plain.



● The view from the cockpit of a Junglie Sea King above Salisbury Plain

Picture: Richard Watt

Moving soldiers around the battlefield and delivering food, ammunition and morale-boosting mail to soldiers living in patrol bases will be the everyday norm in Afghanistan.

Lt Oram said: "The exercise was a great opportunity to put into practice the skills we have been taught in surroundings representative of the theatre we will be going to."

"It also gave relatively-inexperienced aircrew an insight into what operations in

Afghanistan would be like, whilst enabling the more experienced to build on their knowledge."

CHF consists of five squadrons, four of them Naval and the fifth a Combat Service Support Squadron – a combined Royal Navy and Royal Marine force that specialises in amphibious warfare.

They are integrated under the command of an HQ, established to operate helicopters afloat or ashore in support of the UK forces.

The pilots combine commando combat and survival skills with edge-of-the-seat flying ability, operating Sea King and Lynx helicopters in extreme climates and conditions.

Their ability to work in terrain ranging from Arctic to tropical jungle is second to none.

Operations in Borneo in the 1960s earned them the moniker 'Junglies' from the troops on the ground – a soubriquet which current and veteran Junglies covet to this day.



● Soldiers from A Company 1st Battalion the Rifles provide medical assistance to a simulated casualty as a Royal Navy Junglie Sea King hovers in the background

Picture: Cpl James Williams RLC



● A Junglie Sea King Mk4 flies in with an underslung trailer (left) which it puts down for marshallers to race in and detach (above) during Exercise Pashtun Jaguar

Pictures: LA(Phot) Gary Weatherston



Navy still has role to play in Iraq

THE media spotlight might be very firmly focused on Afghanistan, but there is still a dark blue presence in Iraq.

RN training managers or 'Schoolies' are deployed in the southern Iraqi port of Umm Qasr as part of Op Telic.

They have been contributing to the mission by providing English language courses and training support to Iraqi Naval officers and ratings.

Training managers from the Iraqi Training and Advisory Mission Navy (ITAM-N) have been playing an important role in training and mentoring the Iraqi Navy.

Learning English is a priority for the Iraqis as it is the international and maritime language – in order for crews to communicate effectively with other vessels and conduct maritime patrols, it is vital that they have a good grasp of English.

Part of the regeneration of the Iraqi Navy is ensuring that all levels of personnel receive basic English Language Training (ELT), from junior rates to senior officers.

As the RN begin to draw down, teaching English has become increasingly important for the Iraqis.

On completion of the ITAM mission, the Iraqi Navy will be expected to use English at sea to maintain control of their patrol sectors as well as during diplomatic visits.

Both are vital for maintaining security and international relations.

The majority of ELT has been delivered to Iraqi officers and ratings who have been selected to crew the Swiftship vessel – the new 35m patrol ship used for patrolling the waters around the oil platforms on which the country depends for its wealth and future development.

Once the crews had a satisfactory level of English they were able to continue their specialist training in Louisiana, America.

Lt Caila Barnett has not just been teaching English to the Swiftship crews, but also to the Iraqi Marines.

Teaching a combined class of Naval and Marine ratings did not come without its challenges, but she said it certainly was one of the most rewarding experiences of her career to date.

"I anticipated difficulties as I am a female, but it was no different in that respect to teaching a class in the Royal Naval School of Marine Engineering in HMS Sultan," said Lt Barnett.

"The class could only speak Arabic on the first day, but by the end of the course their English had improved significantly.

"They were having conversations in English and even telling jokes. I certainly felt that I had made a big difference."

As well as providing ELT and centrally co-ordinating the training provided by the ITAM-N team, the training managers have also been advising the Iraqi Navy on their training pipelines, policies and teaching strategies.

The aim of this is to provide direction and suggestions for future training where appropriate.

The Iraqi Navy are becoming increasingly independent and although training programmes are in place, the expertise and specialist skill set of the training managers have ensured a rapid rate of development in their Iraqi counterparts.

When the training managers return to the UK, the Iraqis will continue to improve their training management and operational capability, but they will no longer have access to the same specialist support they had previously. However, the training team in Umm Qasr is confident that they have assisted in building a successful, independent and operational Iraqi Navy.

Clyde team restore memorial

SAILORS from HMS Clyde have honoured the crew of HMS Coventry by restoring their memorial.

The ship's company of today's Falklands guardian spent the past few weeks tidying up monuments and memorials peppered around the archipelago as they patrolled the islands.

Either Clyde or the RN's South Atlantic Patrol Ship regularly maintain some of the outlying memorials – most recently HMS Portland's sailors smartened up the Coventry

monument, on Pebble Island, last summer.

Just months later, however, the ferocity of the weather meant a return to Pebble Island was in order, so the men of Clyde duly obliged.

The sailors have also tackled three other memorials during recent patrols: 2 Para's monument at Goose Green, 42 Commando's on Mount Harriet, just outside Stanley – the scene of bitter fighting in the final days of the 1982 conflict – and HMS Sheffield's cenotaph.

The latter stands on Sealion Island,

overlooking the waters several miles away where the Type 42 destroyer was fatally hit by an Argentine Exocet missile.

Elsewhere a bit of Brasso and some good old elbow grease sufficed to spruce up memorials, but on the exposed Bull Hill, where the Sheffield cross and cairn are located, the elements had taken their toll.

Storm damage to the stone wall surrounding the monument was repaired before a formal salute to Shiny Sheff's 20 dead.



Old ship in mint condition

THE 500th anniversary of Henry VIII's flagship the Mary Rose has been commemorated in a new coin from the Royal Mint.

The £2 coin depicts the Tudor warship in contemporary style with flags flying and guns ready, a design created by artist John Bergdahl.

The issue of the coin, which will be in general circulation though it is a limited edition, not only marks 500 years since the ship's maiden voyage from Portsmouth in 1511 but also comes in the year that the Mary Rose Trust lays the foundations for a new museum to display the historic ship to best effect.

A special commemorative version has also been produced struck in gold and silver.

Strictly limited in numbers, these coins are finished to a higher quality than the circulating coins, and are available for purchase from www.royalmint.com

If you don't want to check your change for one of these coins, you can always try the presentation pack, which contains a history of the ship as well as a pristine uncirculated standard £2 Mary Rose coin, also available from the website at a cost of £8.20 plus postage and packing.

Blues at the barracks

VINTAGE Vibes will headline the opening night of the QK Jazz and Blues Club, a new venture at the Quartermaster's Kitchen in the Royal Marines Museum.

Kitchen owner Keith Leaning said he plans to run the club fortnightly on Wednesday nights, showcasing local blues and jazz talent.

Advanced booking will not be required; tickets on the door will cost £10 to include a choice from three meal options plus a first drink.

More details from Keith on 023 9288 2411 or email fruitloops@ntlworld.com

Rescuers sharpen up for Golden Arrow

WHAT requires 28 lorries, two Boeing Globemasters and three gigantic Antonov transport aircraft to move between countries?

No, not the Rolling Stones world tour (at least, not on this occasion).

We are talking about NATO's Submarine Rescue System, which has just been put through its paces in preparation for Exercise Golden Arrow, which was getting under way as *Navy News* went to press.

The exercise is designed to test the ability of the rescue submarine and the team behind it to deploy anywhere in the world within 56 hours to offer help whenever the grim message Submiss, Subsmash or Subsunk is flashed out.

As a warm-up for the exercise off Norway, the mini submarine at the heart of any rescue mission was deployed at the RN armaments depot in Coulport on Loch Long.

A target 'submarine' (actually a bright yellow metal structure which can be angled to simulate a boat lying on its side) was lowered to the loch bed for the rescue submersible to find...

...which it did, before docking with the mock-up to simulate a rescue, depositing life-saving pods containing food, water and oxygen, as it would do in a real crisis.

The distinctive white Submarine Rescue Vehicle is the instantly-recognisable 'face' of NATO's rescue system – but there's much more to this underwater emergency service, jointly owned by Britain, France and Norway.

There's a robot submersible used to locate a stricken boat, clear away any debris and deliver the pods through an escape hatch.

There's the small rescue submarine itself, crewed by two pilots and a rescue chamber



● Members of the NATO Submarine Rescue System team at Coulport

Picture: LA(Phot) Chris Mumby

operator, and capable of rescuing 15 submariners at a time from as deep as 2,000ft (610m).

And there's a mobile decompression and medical support unit for up to 68 deeps.

All of which explains why 28 pantechinons are needed to lift and shift the whole rescue kit, first to Prestwick airport, then on five

transport aircraft to Bergen.

There the system is loaded on to a ship for Golden Arrow; the same ship will deposit the whole lot back to Leith after the exercise.

"The system works," said Brian Grant, the rescue system's base manager. "We've proved that time and again in various exercises but the one thing we've never done

is transport the entire system by plane.

"We're confident we can do it – this is just the final tick in the box.

"We train constantly to make sure that we're ready at a moment's notice. Our loch dip at Coulport was really valuable in keeping our hand in and was a great success."

RFA training room opened Officer cadets graft down on the farm

A STATE-of-the-art training facility, the first of its kind for the RFA, has been officially opened at the A&P Group's Falmouth yard.

The training room, which simulates the computerised working system of the Bay-class landing support ships, will be used to train RFA personnel in trials, tests and fault-finding, without the risk of damage on board a ship.

The new facility is part of the Cluster programme between A&P Group – which has a contract to provide

upkeep support for five of the latest RFA vessels – and the MOD, and was officially opened by Cdre David Preston, the RFA's Head of Afloat Support.

The training room allows for software changes to the Bays, and can simulate systems such as temperature sensors, valve controls and CCTV.

The new Cluster approach will save the MOD an estimated £330m over 30 years compared with the previous arrangement, where contracts were competed for as and when required.

A TEAM of Officer Cadets from Britannia Royal Naval College have made a return visit to the Dartington-based Breakthrough Plus organisation as part of the college's outreach project.

The scheme is a practical development of teamworking

and engenders an awareness of the Royal Navy's commitment to community relations work.

The cadets, all from Vanguard Division, put in four hours of hard, physical work at the School Farm site at Dartington.

This was the second time BRNC had offered support to the Breakthrough Plus organisation, which deals in conflict transformation within children's lives.

They provide a range of experiences and activities tailored to the needs of groups or individuals, and in this instance work with children aged between ten and 16.

Swimming aid

CHILDREN at a swimming pool on a Naval base are now learning to swim with help from Southern Water.

The Collingwood Children's Swimming Club has joined the utility company's Learn to Swim programme – one of more than 80 pools on the scheme in the region.

To mark the formal link, the children had a special visitor to one of their lessons – paralympic and world champion swimmer Sascha Kindred, who chatted to the youngsters and helped with a lesson.



THE Duchess of Cornwall paid a visit to the Royal Navy's specialist medical support ship in Portsmouth, meeting personnel about to deploy to Afghanistan.

In her capacity as Commodore-in-Chief, Royal Naval Medical Services, the Duchess saw the hi-tech facilities and met dozens of personnel on board RFA Argus (see left), including Royal Navy medics who will soon be working in field hospitals in Afghanistan.

The VIP guest was shown the ship's 100-bed hospital facility, including intensive care and high dependency units and two 35-bed general wards, plus the ship's two operating theatres.

The facilities allow Argus to deploy to war zones as a Primary Casualty Receiving Facility, ensuring wounded service personnel of all

nationalities can receive swift care.

Argus also doubles as an aviation training ship – more than two thirds of her length is given over to a flight deck to accommodate any of the Royal Navy's helicopters.

Argus' Hospital Officer Lt Sam Adams said: "It is a great privilege to welcome the Duchess of Cornwall to the ship to see the facilities onboard Argus and meet Royal Navy personnel in her capacity of Commodore-in-Chief of Naval Medical Services.

"It is difficult to comprehend quite what an amazing facility we have until you see it first hand."

Argus will shortly resume her preparations for a series of exercises this summer.

Later in the year she will return to her secondary role of aviation training.



We're building a team for Crete

SINCE MY letter on our visit to Narvik (January), where I wrote that to my disgust I and my carer were the only two people to attend the commemoration of the 70th Anniversary of the 2nd Battle of Narvik, I have made arrangements for us to attend the 70th anniversary of the catastrophic battle for the evacuation of Crete.

This time we have made arrangements that may provide much better results.

I have made contact with Colonel Tony Morphet, who is doubling his duties with those of the senior RN attaché, and the lovely Vice Consul of Crete, Claire Fragaki, and Capt Paul Porter, former CO of HMS York (her predecessor was sunk in Souda Bay).

So we now have a team that can, within the capabilities of their various departments, and provided that the weakened strength of our naval forces allows them to do so, give that little extra push that is required.

We might also mention that Prince Philip, nephew of Lord Louis Mountbatten who was at the time Commanding Officer of HMS Kelly, is Captain General of the Royal Marines.

With his 90 years and my 92, we might just pull it off and see a White Ensign fluttering in the bay. Here's hoping.

— Bernard Hallas, HMS Warspite, Crete, 1941, HXBY

...I ECHO the sentiments of Shipmate Bernard Hallas as one,

now in his 92nd year, who was involved in the evacuation of our Commonwealth troops from Sphakia, on the south coast of Crete, on the night of May 31 1941.

As a sub lieutenant (then in Combined Ops) I was enjoying the 'fleshpots' of Port Said, awaiting passage to HMS Saunders (later Stag) at Kabrit, on the Little Bitter Lake of the Suez Canal, when I was whisked away for temporary appointment in HMS Glengyle lying off the canal entrance.

Just prior to the evacuation I was transferred to HMS Glenroy and given command of an assault landing craft – capacity 30 pongoes – and told to proceed to the beach to embark our 'soldiers', walking wounded first, then transport them to any of our ships anchored a few cables offshore.

A beachmaster was keeping things well under control and our passengers conducted themselves well. I made several trips, not always to the same ship, and to this day cannot name one! It was truly a black moonless night.

There was no enemy action during the evacuation but we suffered several daylight air attacks en route to Alexandria and this became my first experience of action at sea.

I do hope Mr Hallas' plea will have a positive response.

— Lt Cdr Robert Read, Liverpool, New York, USA

We plan to run a supplement about Crete in our May edition – Ed

Another fine Ness

I READ with interest Ken Satterthwaite's letter (February) about HM SDML 3516. I too served on a motor launch, from 1954 to 1955.

The vessel had been ordered to make charts for the newly-formed Mine Watching Association (a sort of Naval Home Guard.)

During the year we progressed around the west coast taking in all the main estuaries.

We eventually ended up working the lochs and harbours in Scotland. The weather was bitterly cold with snow and when we reached the Caledonian Canal it was averaging minus 10°C.

On reaching Loch Ness the skipper decided to liven things up a bit by drawing a Nessie on the echo sounder paper and winding it back into the machine. Halfway through the loch he turned on the echo sounder and this very lifelike picture of Nessie emerged sitting on the loch bottom.

The Sparkie, not of the droogie world, decided to tell Scotland via the lock-keeper at the end of Loch Ness by showing him the echo trace.

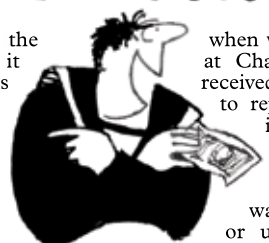
As we approached the other lochs a small crowd had gathered

wanting to see it. By the time we arrived in Inverness the Scottish press were waiting in force and promptly offered substantial amounts of money for the echo trace.

The skipper decided the whole thing had got out of hand, explained to the press it was a hoax and we sailed for Peterhead.

On purchasing the local papers we found the whole episode had hit

JACKPOT!



A £25 Amazon voucher for the letter which moved, entertained and enlightened us the most

the Scottish press with headlines such as *Naval Officer Hoaxes Nessie*.

We now had a very worried skipper and when we eventually arrived at Chatham Dockyard we received a signal that he was to report to the Admiral immediately.

We never did find out what happened but we believe he was either promoted or urgently assigned to take charge of a larger survey vessel because of the illness of the captain.

As for me, I spent my last 12 months in the Navy attached to the South Coast Survey Unit, where I was the only serving rating, a luxury having spent the previous 12 months bouncing around the whole of the UK in a 72ft survey vessel.

— Alan Sargent, Peacehaven, East Sussex



● RN and RAF Harriers in diamond formation over Eastern England during the jets' final flypast

Picture: Cpl Al Crowe, RAF Cottesmore

'Save the Harrier'

THE implications of the recommendations of the recent Strategic Defence and Security Review are that Her Majesty's Royal Navy will soon be at its lowest level of capability since the days of Alfred the Great.

This means that we shall be unable to protect our trade upon the high seas, our global interests and our offshore territories.

Since World War II our ability (and that of the United States) to project military and political power and influence has been centred entirely upon aircraft carrier battle groups.

This impressive record has not been lost on other nations who now aspire to a robust aircraft carrier presence and capability within their fleets, especially India and China but also including Spain, Italy and France.

The recommended gapping of this capability (Harrier/Ark Royal) within the Royal Navy for at least ten years will essentially destroy 100 years

of Fleet Air Arm expertise and experience.

Once lost, it will not be easily regained, if at all – and it arguably places our future economic prosperity in jeopardy.

I urge your readers therefore to write to their MPs concerning this issue and to give their support to the 'Save the Harrier' Petition at: www.ipetitions.com/petition/primeminister.

For background reading on this important issue they could do worse than read the papers on the Phoenix Think Tank website, thephoenixthinktank.wordpress.com, and my own associated comments at www.sharkeysworld.com.

We must all do our best to eradicate the 'sea blindness' that appears to have overtaken our politicians and decision-makers.

— Cdr N D MacCartan-Ward, ('Sharkey' Ward)

Scott's scientific support

FURTHER to David Poole's letter (January), understanding the full story of the 'race' between Scott and Amundsen is indeed more complex than has been represented by some recent authors.

Scott defined the aims of his 1910-13 expedition in his initial public appeal: "The main objective of this expedition is to reach the South Pole, and to secure for the British Empire the honour of this achievement."

There were other significant objectives, however; both scientific and geographical.

Science was considered by chief scientist Wilson as the main work of the expedition: "No one can say that it will have only been a Pole-hunt... We want the scientific work to make the bagging of the Pole merely an item in the results."

The expedition, which included a number of scientists, fulfilled a detailed programme of geological, biological, magnetic and meteorological investigations on an unprecedented scale.

The diaries of the expedition scientists record Scott as having a considerable interest in their

research, and a strong commitment to enable it to take place.

The Library and Archives of the Scott Polar Research Institute hold much of the primary material for anyone wanting evidence of Scott's intentions.

The Institute was founded in 1920 as the national memorial to Scott and his four companions who died on their return journey from the Pole.

Today it is an internationally-known research centre concerned with both the Arctic and Antarctic, with its home in the University of Cambridge – a fitting legacy to Captain Scott's own interest in, and support of, polar science.

For a balanced view of Scott and the British Antarctic Expedition, 1910-13, a good place to start is David Crane's biography, *Scott of the Antarctic* (HarperCollins, 2005) available from the Polar Museum shop www.spri.cam.ac.uk/shop

— Professor Julian Dowdeswell

Director, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge

A letter by Hugh Axton on this subject that was too long to go in the paper has been published on the Navy News website at navynews.co.uk – Ed

Crown jewel

THE PICTURE of HMS Diamond, (February) built for a mind-boggling £1bn, sent me back in time to when I served on the 1,850-ton Tribal-class destroyer HMS Punjabi.

She was commissioned in 1939 and was built for an awful lot of money at the time – £343,005!

She had a top speed of 36 knots, but since most of the time we were operating in rough seas I doubt we ever tested that statistic.

She had a war-time crew of 250 and I doubt if Diamond's complement, given the myriad electronic systems on board, comes close to that number.

The people of Aberdeen must be rightly proud of their adopted ship. She's a beauty!

— Ken Tipper, Ocala, Florida

Honour our boys

YOUR READERS may recall my article on the *Navy News* website (*Dittybox*) about RN boys aged 16 and 17 who were killed in action during World War 2.

I have now completed updating and added the death list details for each boy.

The known details to date show that 534 boys, 16 and 17 years old, who had volunteered to join the RN at 15, had been killed in action. This news was kept from the public.

My next step is to propose that a memorial be dedicated to those boys.

This may be in the form of a wall or floor tablet or plaque to be placed in a prominent position in Portsmouth Cathedral, unveiled in an RN ceremony.

I feel that at my age of nearly 89 years I will be unable to carry this idea forward and would like it to be taken up by those who are experts in this field.

I would like to see an inscription on this memorial, with part of Binyon's poem *For the Fallen* including the lines *They shall grow not old as we who are left grow old*.

And I would like to see a book of remembrance for relatives and the public.

I would thank anyone who can help bring this to a successful conclusion.

— James Reed, Hedge End, Southampton

Florida bound?

I FIRST joined the United States Navy League when based in Washington DC in 1983 working as Chairman of Marconi USA.

Now spending time in St Augustine in retirement I have rejoined and the local Navy League Council takes a keen interest in visiting Royal Navy ships when berthed in Mayport nearby.

Most recently HMS Ocean and HMS Ark Royal have visited.

The Navy League members, both former serving officers and civilian/industry, take real pleasure in entertaining visiting RN crew.

Any RN ship which deploys in the Caribbean or to exercises on the US east coast is well-advised to contrive a few days in Mayport before facing the rigours of an Atlantic crossing for home.

Golf, fishing, or a Jaguars game can soon be arranged. I now act as RN liaison, so keep us posted.

— Ian Sutherland, St Augustine Navy League Council, Florida

Adieu Chatham

I AM a 72-year-old ex-Chatham matelot and together with hundreds of others clapped and cheered as the guard of HMS Chatham with bayonets fixed marched through Chatham led, of course, by the Royal Marines Band.

Leaving the town centre they marched along Dock Road to the waiting dignitaries. Then I heard the order that brought a lump to my throat – 'Unfix bayonets!'

And so, the 'At 'em Chathams' lost Chatham and Chatham lost another piece of Royal Navy history.

A sad but proud day.

— R Betsey, Rochester, Kent

opinion

THE PICTURE of HMS Cornwall (page 5) rescuing five Yemeni fishermen from Somali pirates is a cheering reminder of what the RN does best – cool-headed, resolute teamwork.

Photographs and film footage of these rescues published in the media show the dramatic closing stages of a successful operation – but not what led up to it. Behind every such mission are weeks and months of sustained and repetitive hard work, of unceasing vigilance and endless patrols.

Nor is it a unilateral effort. Piracy, one of the great and growing scourges of the modern age, can only be deterred by international teams of coalition partners working together with a common purpose, sharing relevant intelligence, and bound by international law.

Combined Task Force 151, of which Cornwall is currently

a part, is one of three multi-national operations countering piracy in the region.

There are more than a dozen warships from several nations operating in the Gulf of Aden at any one time. Their shared aim is to suppress piracy in order to protect global maritime security and secure freedom of navigation for the benefit of all nations.

Piracy threatens the trade and prosperity of richer nations, but the very lives of those who live closer to its shadow.

One can only imagine the feelings of the five Yemeni fishermen who had been held hostage for more than three months, as they saw salvation appear in the form of Cornwall and her Lynx.

The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of the MOD



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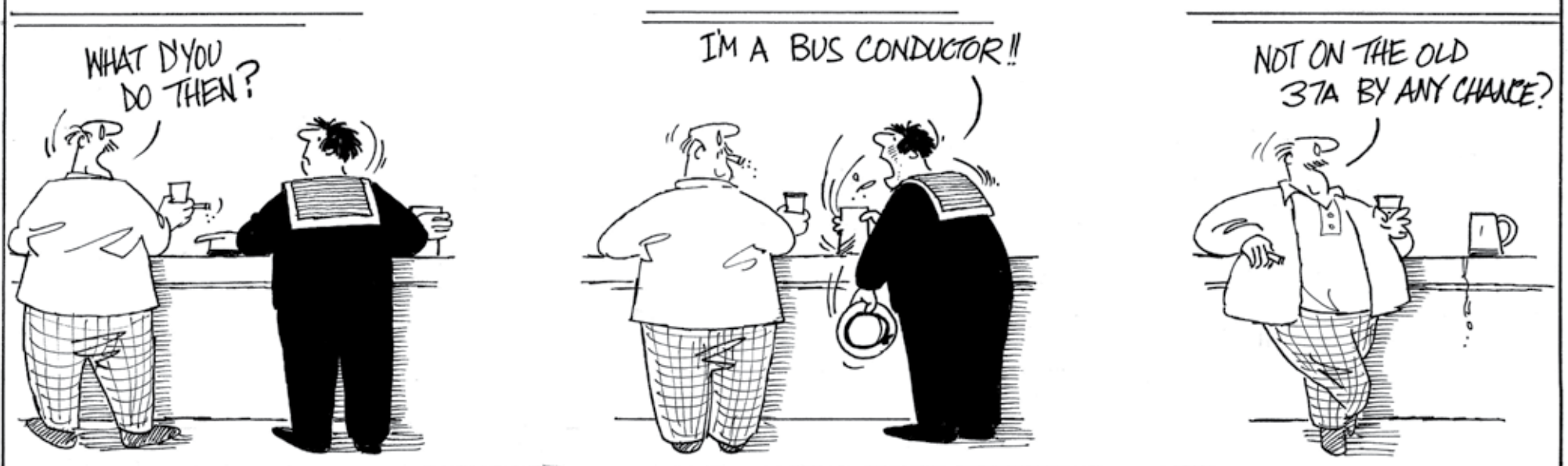
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CLASSIC
JACK

BY TUGS



Magnificent 7's unbroken record

WHILST sorting out some of my old Navy photos I came across this picture of the 7th Destroyer cross-country and road running and relay team.

Our team was undefeated for

the 18 months the squadron was in commission.

On a visit to Malta in 2009 I found out we still held the records for the village-to-village-relay and the Floriana to Spinola team race

set in 1960!

After each race we had a 5/-s run ashore in the Bamboo Bar at Sliema front.

— Jack 'Mac' McHale,
Horsforth, Leeds

C-class calling

I AM the recruitment officer for the 8th Destroyer Association – a well-respected naval organisation which has members around the country.

We are hoping that many officers and ratings who served in 'C' class destroyers in the China station between 1945 and 1963 would like to join our association.

We are also asking any RN personnel who served in any 'C' class destroyers in other parts of the world after this period to join us as well, as we would love to hear from you – and you could meet many former shipmates.

We meet in Scarborough at the beginning of September every year for our reunion and we also produce and send two booklets to members, which are well-received.

Subscriptions are £10 per year. If you would like to receive an application form, please contact me at 2 Rydal Avenue, North Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE30 3UG or email me at frankcharity@hotmail.co.uk and I will respond to your request.

— Robert Smith, Tyne and Wear

Saved by Scousers

HAVING read the letter from Kenneth Tipper (January) about his friend's view of the historic surrender of the Japanese on the USS Missouri, I thought your readers might like to read about my late father-in-law, John 'George' Cowen, ex AB, who died in April 2010 after a short illness.

He too witnessed this event from the flight deck of HMS Ruler, moored alongside Missouri.

He did not talk about his war service until 15 years ago, when he showed me some photos and newspaper cuttings from an old shoebox.

What he did tell me was that after Ruler was paid off in San Francisco, the whole crew had a long train ride across America to New York, followed by a troopship to England.

They were put in an ex-Axis PoW camp near Liverpool.

The big problem was that the Admiralty forgot them. There was no food or drink, and the captain's phone calls were disregarded.

The solution was scavenging

teams after midnight who took borrowed carts and wheelbarrows out into the fields nicking spuds, sprouts, cabbages – in fact, anything edible. This went on for some weeks.

But out of this sorry tale came saviours – the people of Liverpool. They heard of their plight and came to the camp in droves to share their rations.

Of course, someone at the Admiralty finally remembered and an apology was given, after which they were demobbed and were glad to return home!

— Bob Allison, Heworth, York

Short and sweet (and sour)

THE PETS that HMS Wolverton had to leave behind in Chinese Hong Kong (letters, February) probably got eaten.

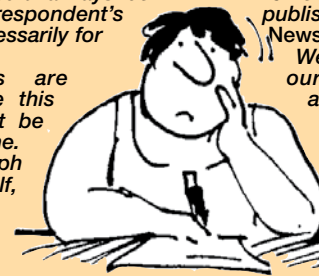
Especially the terrapins and the bird.

— Roger Brunskill, Twickenham

LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and address, not necessarily for publication.

E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information. Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone.

If you submit a photograph which you did not take yourself, please make sure that you have the permission for us to publish it.



Given the volume of letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in Navy News.

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We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues.

The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.





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Trailblazing appointment for Kay

THE Royal Navy has its first female Senior Observer.

Lt Cdr Kay Burbidge (*above*) took over the position at 829 Naval Air Squadron, based at Culdrose, after completing a Flight Commander's appointment in HMS Monmouth.

Lt Cdr Burbidge joined the Royal Navy in 1988 as a Wren Air Engineering Mechanic (Weapons Electrical) and was selected for commission in 1995.

During her time as a mechanic she worked on Hunters, Chipmunks and Devon aircraft, and on Sea King Mk5 helicopters on 820 Naval Air Squadron during the Adriatic conflict.

She gained her Observer 'wings' in 1997 whilst on 810 Squadron, flying in the Sea King Mk6.

Since completion of her Operational Flying Training she has served with 820 Squadron in HMS Ark Royal and on 771 Squadron carrying out search and rescue duties.

She later qualified as the Navy's first female Helicopter Warfare Instructor and since converting to Merlin Mk1 helicopters in 2004, she has served as the instructor on both 814 Squadron and 824 Squadron, teaching tactics and instructing on gunnery courses for the Merlin Helicopter Force.

Lt Cdr Burbidge said: "Joining up as a non sea-going, blue-badge-wearing Wren, my recent appointment is a true reflection as to the advances in the opportunities available to females in the Armed Forces today."

Trained in TRiM

THE first group of successful Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) candidates have been awarded their certificates by Capt Alastair Jenkin, Chief of Staff for the Maritime Warfare School, at HMS Collingwood.

WO Rosie Dodd and POs Mark Mawhinney and James Robson of the Warfare Training Group, and Cpl Elaine Shakespere of the Royal Marines Band Collingwood, are now officially TRiM Practitioners.

TRiM is taking what is already an informal part of the mess deck and ensuring that people are mentored and monitored appropriately whether it is through the divisional, pastoral, medical or welfare systems.

Or, in other words, it's simply good man-management and caring for their people.

A relatively new initiative in the Royal Navy, TRiM was introduced to support personnel who are not just returning from or going to theatre, but dealing with abnormal issues.

The TRiM Training Team deal with approximately one course of up to 12 students a week from the Navy and Royal Marines, and currently have a near-steady state of around 85 per cent of the Fleet having a TRiM team available.

As well as the Practitioners courses, there are also Team Leaders courses and career courses such as EWOs, JCC, ACC, CO Designate, 4s, which provide OSM briefs throughout the Fleet.

They also brief the pre-deployment course at the Mounting Centre.

Wizzer takes to the air in Lightning II

A FORMER Royal Navy pilot has taken the controls of an F-35 Lightning II and clocked up a minor milestone in the jet's development programme.

BAE Systems' test pilot Peter 'Wizzer' Wilson became just the third Briton to take the controls of the supersonic stealth jet.

And days after his first flight at Patuxent River, Maryland, Wizzer became the first non-American pilot to fly the carrier variant, which is now the UK's chosen F-35 variant.

Most recently Wizzer flew in the Short Take-Off and Vertical Landing (STOVL) mode for the first time.

Following months of training on the F-35 simulators, this series of firsts were momentous occasions for 'Wizzer' and for BAE Systems, who play a key role in the STOVL flight test programme.

Of his first flight in the STOVL

aircraft – he was in the air for just over an hour – Peter said the aircraft handled beautifully: "All in all it was an absolute pleasure to fly."

'Wizzer' has been preparing for this day since his arrival in the US in 2006, and has trained in simulators for five years.

Wizzer made his first flight in a Cessna 150 at the age of 17, and has since clocked up more than 3,000 hours of flight time on various aircraft including the Sea Harrier and Hawk.

After joining the RAF in 1986 Wizzer spent time as a jet instructor before starting flying Sea Harriers as an exchange officer with the Royal Navy. He subsequently transferred to the Navy and saw action in Bosnia, Iraq and Sierra Leone.

He then joined BAE Systems as a Harrier test pilot in 2000.



● Peter 'Wizzer' Watson in the F-35 Lightning II

Brothers compare notes on training

TWO brothers-in-arms have exchanged good practice in military training at the Royal Navy's school for new recruits.

Capt Steve Murdoch, the Commanding Officer of HMS Raleigh, was proud to welcome his younger brother Lt Col Mike Murdoch for a two-day visit to the Royal Navy training base at Torpoint in Cornwall.

Lt Col Murdoch is the Commanding Officer of the 1st Infantry Training Battalion, based in Catterick, charged with the overall responsibility of taking infantry recruits through their 26-week combined basic and specialist training course.

During his time at HMS Raleigh Lt Col Murdoch was briefed on the Royal Navy's nine-week initial training course for recruits, and was able to see for himself some of the training taking place.

He was also given an appreciation of HMS Raleigh's wider role in preparing Naval personnel for front-line operations during visits to the other training units based at the establishment, including the Submarine School and the Board and Search training school.

Capt Murdoch said: "It was a real thrill to have my brother visit Raleigh and to have the opportunity to share notes on how we each train recruits for service in the Armed Forces."

"The Service and uniform might be different but it is very clear that the core values of commitment, courage, discipline, respect, integrity and loyalty are as relevant within the infantry as they are in the Royal Navy."

"As all three Armed Forces



● Capt Steve Murdoch greets his brother, Lt Col Mike Murdoch, at HMS Raleigh

Picture: Dave Sheffield

come under significant pressure to demonstrate improved efficiency and effectiveness, it is vital we all understand better the contribution each of us make to the wider Defence endeavour.

"So from a professional and personal perspective there was very real benefit and enjoyment gained from my brother's visit."

This was Lt Col Murdoch's first visit to HMS Raleigh.

The Army officer said: "I thoroughly enjoyed my visit."

"It was the first time I'd seen Royal Navy basic training."

"It's a bit different to what we do at Catterick, but our duty-of-care responsibilities and requirement to look after our young recruits and

prepare them for further service are very similar."

"Two things stood out – the exceptional quality of the instructors in HMS Raleigh, who were extremely impressive, and the high quality of the entrants to the Royal Navy."

Top marks for Alistair

THE award for the top student on HMS Collingwood's PO(EW) course has gone to LS Alistair Rogers, who is due to join Type 23 frigate HMS Lancaster in the near future.

LS Rogers, who joined up in 2000, was presented with the Herbert Lott award, which is sponsored by the Association of Old Crows, an international organisation for people specialising in electronic warfare.

The name 'Old Crows' is said to originate from the wartime codename Raven, given to Allied personnel whose job was to disrupt enemy communications and radar systems.

"My brother and I served in HMS Fearless together ten years ago, so it is another remarkable coincidence that we are now both running training establishments."

"Our close personal relationship has obviously helped us to understand better how each of us go about our business in training and we hope to foster a closer working relationship between the Infantry Training Centre and HMS Raleigh in the future."

While Capt Murdoch joined the Navy in 1980, his brother opted for the Royal Irish Rangers in 1990.

Capt Murdoch's career has included service at sea in the Falklands and the Persian Gulf and a variety of shore appointments, including Executive Assistant to the First Sea Lord.

Lt Col Murdoch has been involved in a number of operational deployments to Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Kosovo and Iraq.

He has also served with the Royal Marines at HQ 3 Commando Brigade in Stonehouse and at the Commando Training Centre RM, Lympstone.

Lt Col Murdoch assumed command of the 1st Infantry Training Battalion in January 2009 and his brother was appointed to a similar role for the Royal Navy in December the same year.

Cornwell VC provides inspiration

ONE of Britain's greatest actors spent a day at HMS Raleigh as he sought inspiration for a film.

Oscar-winner Sir Ben Kingsley is looking into a Great War project, and was keen to see one of the Torpoint establishment's most prized possessions to assist his research.

Boy seaman John Travers Cornwell became one of the country's most celebrated naval heroes and earned a posthumous Victoria Cross for his actions at the Battle of Jutland in 1916.

The 16-year-old remained at his post aboard HMS Chester despite his gun receiving four direct hits; when the cruiser withdrew Cornwell finally received treatment but succumbed to his wounds in hospital two days later.

As Cornwell's fame spread, court painter Frank Salisbury recorded his deeds on canvas, and almost a century later that recently-restored painting is in pride of place in St Paul's Church at Raleigh.

CO Capt Steve Murdoch said today's young sailors learn about Cornwell's dedication and bravery – and hopefully can draw some inspiration from his deeds.

Having spent time in the 'presence' of Boy Cornwell, Sir Ben toured Raleigh's new heritage centre and witnessed a passing out parade of sailors who had just completed their basic training.

"The parade and the emotional scenes of pride and achievement will stay with me for a long time," said Sir Ben.

"The pride and dignity of the recruits – and their friends and relatives – was an indelible image. All this heightened by awareness of Jack Cornwell's extraordinary courage and sense of duty."

Triumphal tour of UK

A TEAM of submariners from HMS Triumph has completed a goodwill tour across the country, visiting many of the boat's affiliates.

The ten-man team of ratings and officers travelled more than 550 miles and visited four towns – Fareham, Malvern, Hinckley and Blackpool.

Along the way they saw a panto (*The Wizard of Oz*, at Malvern St James junior school), discussed links with Triumph Motorcycles, toured a football stadium (Premiership newcomers Blackpool's Bloomfield Road), and talked to numerous schoolchildren about the work of the Navy in general and the Submarine Service in particular.

The team also visited the submarine's newly-adopted charity, the Brian House Children's Hospice, meeting some desperately-ill children and confirming that their choice of charity was the correct one.

Ark Royal captured in paint by hairdresser



SO there you are, in one of the chairs in MopDoc's barbershop in Portsmouth Naval Base, with proprietor Julia Pankhurst getting to grips with your unruly barnet.

Perhaps you might like a little music in the background? How about the CD *Out of a Tree* by Jude – otherwise known as Julia Pankhurst?

Pleased with the way the trim is going? You could capture the look in acrylics – Julia happens to be an accomplished artist as well.

And if you just want to chat, maybe about the weekend's football, best make it Spurs – because Julia is a direct descendent of a Tottenham Hotspur legend.

Let's get the Spurs business out the way first; Julia is the great granddaughter of Bobby Buckle, revered in certain parts of North London as the schoolboy founder of the Hotspur Football Club in 1882 at the age of 13; he was their first captain and first goalscorer and served the club throughout his life, including being on the board of directors.

● Capt Jerry Kyd, last Commanding Officer of HMS Ark Royal, and Julia Pankhurst with her acrylic painting of the ship

And the music? Copies of Jude's album are available at the shop, and Julia has caught the attention of A&R men in the past, though nothing has come of that interest – as yet.

So on to the paintings, something that Julia shone at while at school, and a pastime she has returned to with a vengeance in recent months.

She was particularly struck by pictures she saw of Ark Royal in Scotland before returning to Portsmouth for the last time to decommission, and she set out to capture the ship in paint.

The resulting A1-sized picture, *All Quiet at Twilight*, has attracted interest, and the last Commanding Officer of the iconic carrier, Capt Jerry Kyd, recently dropped by to sign 200 copies of the print which Julia has produced.

She said other Naval personnel have inquired about paintings of their own ships as well.

For more details of Julia's artistic side, including how to order a print, see www.pankhurstpaintings.co.uk

And in the meantime Julia continues to cut hair at the Naval Base – another skill she learned she possessed in her early teens, and a useful form of income over the years as she has followed her various muses.



● Cdr Matt Avison with his son Chris
Picture: Craig Keating (VT Flagship)

Another Avison aviator

WHEN a father has a successful career, it is only natural for his children to take particular note when deciding their own future.

In the case of Chris Avison, his father – Cdr Matt Avison – was, among other things, in command of the Sea King force at RN air station Culdrose.

Chris joined the Royal Navy in April last year and successfully completed initial officer training at Britannia Royal Naval College by Christmas.

And Matt was delighted to attend the Passing-out Parade nearly 25 years after he passed through the college.

"I was quite surprised when Chris told me he wanted to join the Service," confessed Cdr Avison after the parade.

"It has been great to see his enthusiasm for such an exciting and demanding career, and I don't mind admitting my immense pride in watching him on parade today."

The course that Mid Chris Avison completed in December saw him challenged both physically and mentally, and included ten weeks embarked in HMS Albion.

This initial fleet time provides all cadets with an introduction to all specialisations and departments across an operational warship.

In Chris's case it meant a comprehensive look at amphibious operations, as a contingent of Royal Marines were embarked for an exercise off northern Scotland.

As Mid Avison has joined the Navy as a pilot, he has now to undertake flying grading, the next stage in his professional progression.

Merlin 13 nearly there

THIRTEEN naval aircrew students are deploying to complete the final stage of their training to fly the Royal Navy's anti-submarine helicopter, the Merlin Mk1.

For the past year the students have been on an intensive course at 824 Naval Air Squadron, based at Culdrose, and are now going to sea onboard RFA Argus to complete their final stages of training and assessments.

For the students – five pilots, three observers and five aircrewmen – this embarkation is the culmination of up to four years training, and is the final assessment before they are presented with their 'wings' next month.

During the embarkation they will be stretched to the limits to show that they are capable of operating one of the world's most advanced aircraft in a variety of simulated wartime scenarios.

Since the withdrawal from service of the RAF's Nimrod, the Navy's Merlin is the only aircraft in the UK's arsenal capable of locating and tracking submarines.

Turbulent times for chef on a mission

TV CHEF Heston Blumenthal accepted the challenge to bring his unique cooking style to the world of submarines for a Channel 4 series entitled *Heston's Mission Impossible*.

The crew of HMS Turbulent were chosen to be the guinea pigs for Heston's ideas for cooking in such testing conditions.

The celebrity chef spent time working with the submarine's chefs both at sea and alongside, and Turbulent's crew thoroughly enjoyed having the celebrated 'culinary alchemist' onboard.

For the most part he was treated as any other sailor might be.

He was given the opportunity to see how the submarine operates on a day-to-day basis and also to take part in certain aspects of its operation.

Not all of Heston's ideas were immediately a success with those onboard, as cooking meals that are popular for all with just £2.34 per day per man is not easy.

However, his unquestionable skill in the kitchen proved useful and the submarine's chefs and logistics department came away having learnt some valuable lessons.

Filming for the programme also took place at HMS Raleigh, where Heston was initially taught what



● TV chef Heston Blumenthal joins a New Entry class on parade ground training at HMS Raleigh

Picture: Dave Sherfield

it takes and what it means to be a sailor.

He took part in parade training alongside a class of new recruits, joined them for an assault course run and volunteered to be the duty swimmer during 'swimmer of the watch' training, jumping into the River Lynher from the Training Ship Brecon to rescue

the dummy casualty.

Heston sent his two development chefs to the Defence Maritime Logistics School (DMLS) at Raleigh to find out how the Royal Navy trains its junior chefs.

He and his team also used the DMLS facilities to develop their ideas and prepare the food they eventually served up to the crew

of Turbulent.

Heston's Mission Impossible is a four-part series, which was due to start on Channel 4 on Tuesday evenings as *Navy News* went to press.

The Royal Navy programme is due for transmission in the middle of this month – see listings for confirmation and details.

Transatlantic take on catering in the Navy

THREE American sailors have been blazing a trail for a new transatlantic programme of co-operation.

Lt Jacob Soviero, from New York, has taken up a two-year appointment as the Deputy Chief of Staff at the Defence Maritime Logistics School, based at HMS Raleigh.

Compatriots Culinary Specialist First Class Emiely Sampayan-Marcos and Culinary Specialist (Seaman) Cameron Johnson, joined Royal Navy chefs to undergo training at the school.

The initiative follows a visit to Raleigh by Rear Admiral Michael J Lyden, Commander US Navy Supply Corps, in November 2009.

Lt Soviero said: "Admiral Lyden was impressed by the DMLS on a recent visit and decided that it would be a fantastic opportunity for a US Supply Corps officer to come and see just how the Logistics Branch of the Royal Navy operates."

"This specific exchange is a definite building block to develop a relationship in the culinary arts and culinary services between our two navies."

"We hope that this may very well develop into a yearly occurrence with our sailors coming here for training or maybe even expanding the exchange to include a complete class of USN chefs."



● Culinary Specialists Cameron Johnson (left) and Emiely Sampayan-Marcos with Lt Jacob Soviero USN

Picture: Dave Sherfield

One of Lt Soviero's tasks will be to develop his role for the benefit of future exchange officers.

CS1 Sampayan-Marcos is currently attached to the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan, based in her home town of San Diego, California.

She took part in the RN's advanced cookery course, designed to prepare chefs for promotion to leading hand.

Her training has included lessons on presentation techniques and how to cook British and French dishes, which she intends to share with her junior colleagues.

CSSN Johnson, from Georgia, of the aircraft carrier USS Enterprise, took the RN's basic

chefs course.

He has also attended night classes to learn how to cook advance meals for high profile events.

Lt Soviero said: "The differing size of the navies mean that there is a huge difference between the US Navy and the Royal Navy."

"Typically a class of chefs graduating from our Chef School in Meridian, Mississippi, will be huge in comparison to the six or eight-student class size here at the DMLS."

"The Royal Navy is run on a smaller scale, but just as efficiently."

"For CS Sampayan-Marcos and CS Johnson this is an amazing

experience and they will take away a great deal."

"US Navy chefs cook from a standard core menu based upon recipe cards which are identical on every ship in the Navy, this being the most cost-effective way of feeding a ship's company that could number up to 5,000 on an aircraft carrier – but it means there isn't as much room for creativity."

"That's why this opportunity for the US chefs has been so beneficial; since coming here they have learned to cook, smell, taste and feel the food they are cooking."

"As a result their chef skills have improved ten-fold."

"You can really see their enjoyment as they learn a new skill or prepare a dish they have never seen or heard of before."

"They will without a doubt arrive back onboard with a greater respect and knowledge of the Royal Navy and the DMLS as a whole."

"More importantly they will be able to share these new skills and experiences with their shipmates."

The DMLS is part of the wider Defence College of Logistics and Personnel Administration.

Commander Nic Dodd, Commandant of the DMLS, said: "I am absolutely delighted at the burgeoning relationship between DMLS and the USN Supply Corps."



Family Lynx enhanced

THE appointment of a new Commanding Officer for the largest helicopter squadron in the world completes a long-held ambition for the new incumbent – and continues a family link with the Lynx.

Cdr Louis Wilson-Chalon (pictured above) takes the reins at 815 Naval Air Squadron at Yeovilton, an outfit which boasts 25 Lynx and almost 400 personnel.

And as reported by Thomas Cock, Yeovil reporter for the *Western Gazette*, it was a particular source of pride for Louis' father Peter who, some 40 years ago, was a Westlands flight test engineer working on the first prototypes of the Lynx at Yeovilton.

Peter, who ended his 45-year career at Westlands in 1999 as chief test engineer, visited his son at Yeovilton shortly before Louis took up the post, and Wilson-Chalon senior was able to see just how far the aircraft – which held the record as the world's fastest helicopter – has come in four decades.

Louis' interest in aviation was heavily influenced by his father – he used to visit the factory with Dad and wanted to fly helicopters, and command his own squadron, from an early age.

Effective remedies

A LEADING hand in the Commando Training Centre RM logistics office has been awarded the Commandant's Efficiency Prize for her "highly-effective" organisational skills.

Lt Zoe Sleeman has been at Lympstone for less than a year, but she has repeatedly identified and rectified administrative shortcomings in the busy training environment.

Lt Zoe Sleeman is responsible for administering more than 150 Personnel Loan Record accounts and managing unit losses, and has also covered vacant posts, including office manager, "playing a pivotal role in maintaining continuity within the department".

Graphic endeavour

POWERFUL imagery illustrating past and present at RN air station Culdrose resulted in an award by the establishment's Commanding Officer to a graphics specialist.

Tony Allen was given the Culdrose Award for Special Endeavour by Capt Toby Williamson for his efforts in contributing to the operational effectiveness of the air station.

The award recognises the contribution made by Service and civilian employees, and is given to those who go the extra mile – in Tony's CASE because it supported the Captain's wish for everyone at Culdrose to share its history, be aware of the activities going on, and feel part of the greater Culdrose 'family'.

Plenty to celebrate in Bulwark

AN 18th birthday is not an event to let pass without a special celebration.

So when Std Joshua Davies sat down to lunch onboard HMS Bulwark on his 18th birthday, he was presented with a cake.

And the man presenting the cake was the CO, Capt Alex Burton (pictured left).

There were cheers amongst his shipmates as everyone joined in a sing-along to wish him a happy birthday.

Joshua said "I was delighted to receive a birthday cake from the Captain – I thought it was a very kind and thoughtful gesture."

Joshua was the assault ship's last remaining under 18.

The ship was conducting post-upkeep trials off the South Coast (see page 4).

Another sailor with reason to celebrate was LET(ME) Robert Fuca, who was named Bulwark's Man of the Year.

LET Fuca was recognised for his exceptional performance as the man responsible for docking support periods of the Landing Craft Utility (LCU).

CPO 'Richie' Killick and PO 'Smudge' Smith received CO's Commendations for their outstanding contribution during Bulwark's refit, and efficiency awards were also presented to RPO Scott Kerrison and NA(AH) Phil Watt.





'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'

Book your own rooms this year

THE programme for this year's National Conference is taking shape, and delegates are reminded they will have to make their own accommodation booking this time.

Last year saw staff at RNA Headquarters take a leading role in sorting out administration for the visit to Ouistreham in Normandy, including booking ferries and accommodation.

But with the conference back on UK soil – Plymouth is the host branch – individuals will be sorting out their own arrangements.

The conference itself will be held in the Guildhall on Royal Parade, with a number of functions also taking place in the WOs and CPOs Mess at HMS Drake in Devonport.

There is no accommodation at HMS Drake, and delegates and observers should not contact the mess or Drake accommodation office.

The Plymouth Tourist Office can advise on such matters – their telephone number is 01752 306330.

Delegates and observers will also need to make their own arrangements for getting between venues; a taxi fare between HMS Drake and the conference venue is around £5 one way.

Access to HMS Drake can only be guaranteed for named people and their vehicles, so it is important to be accurate when completing a booking form.

Coaches can only gain access through the Camel's Head Gate, and again details of vehicle and driver must be supplied in advance.

The outline programme is:

■ **Friday June 10:** Welcome buffet at WOs and CPOs Mess, HMS Drake; President's Dinner at WO and CPOs Mess, HMS Drake.

■ **Saturday June 11:** Conference at Plymouth Guildhall.

Conference Gala Dinner at WO and CPOs Mess, HMS Drake (1930).

■ **Sunday June 12:** Service and dedication of new National Standard at St Andrew Minster Church, Plymouth, and old standard laid up.

March to Plymouth Hoe, and wreath laying at Naval Memorial.

Light buffet and bar at Guildhall (payable over the bar).



● Association branch standards, members and friends gather at Ford Park Chapel before visiting the grave of Lt George Hinckley VC

Veterans salute Victorian hero

ROYAL Navy veterans and supporters turned out in force to pay tribute to a Victorian hero.

Members and friends of Plymouth branch of the RNA, the HMS Ganges Association and the Burma Star Association paraded at the graveside of Lt George Hinckley VC in Ford Park Cemetery to pay their respects.

Alongside them was Mrs Joan Smith, Hinckley's great granddaughter, and Andrew Smith, his great great grandson.

A wreath was placed on the grave by Plymouth RNA Life Vice President S/M Harry Sparks, and a short service of remembrance was conducted by Rev Peter Warland, the Queen's Honorary chaplain to the Royal Navy.

Lt Hinckley was serving as an Able Seaman aboard the six-gun

Albacore-class wooden paddle sloop HMS Sphinx during the Taiping Rebellion in China in 1862, when rebel forces attempted to overthrow their government.

Hinckley was part of a Naval Brigade which joined forces with a 3,000-strong Imperial Chinese army unit and a 500-strong Sino-French force under a French Navy lieutenant.

Alongside the Sphinx brigade were similar groups from sister gunboats Hardy and Flamer.

The sailors marched 30 miles overnight on October 8-9 1862 to attack the fortified settlement of Fung Wha, near Shanghai, facing driving rain and poor roads.

Within four hours of their 4am breakfast of biscuit and a tot of rum, the Sphinx brigade had joined the main force in front of the gates of Fung Wha.

The Imperial Chinese troops

were driven off with heavy losses, leaving the dead and dying strewn across the ground in front of the town's fortifications.

Amongst those seriously injured and lying in the open were Mr Croker, assistant master of the Sphinx, and Capt Bruman of the Chinese group.

Despite the fact that the ground was being raked by gunshot, shrapnel, stinkpots (jars filled with noxious material) and the like, Hinckley ran into the open, picked up Mr Croker, put him over his shoulder and ran for the shelter of a joss-house or temple around 150 metres away.

Having returned to his place, Hinckley volunteered for a second dash into the hail of metal, this time rescuing Bruman.

The 43-year-old's actions won him a Victoria Cross.

Hinckley, a Liverpoolian with a

chequered career, lost the VC at a funeral just four months later, and had to stump up 24 shillings for replacement.

He died in Plymouth on New Year's Eve 1904, aged 85.

Shipmates were most grateful to all who attended the event, and to the Friends of Ford Park Cemetery for providing information, shelter, and hot refreshments on what turned out to be an extremely cold day.

More information on the branch and activities is available from chairman S/M Bob Palmer on 01752 509931 or social secretary Sue Gutteridge on 01752 849176.

Wetherby celebrates anniversary

MORE than 20 shipmates and their guests gathered at the Pax Inn, Thorp Arch, for a dinner to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the commissioning of Wetherby branch.

Social secretary S/M Vince Parks gave the roll-call of the 17 members who had crossed the bar since 1996, while branch president S/M Eric Drummond expressed the gratitude of the branch for the continuing support which shipmates receive from their spouses.

He added: "We miss those that cannot be with us tonight for medical reasons, and our thoughts are with them."

Honorary member Cdr Mark Lister had to send his regrets that he could not attend, but he was otherwise engaged on active duty.

Dagenham looks back

THE RNA may have received its charter in 1954, but shipmates at Dagenham branch are looking a few year further back for a reason for a knees-up.

As *Navy News* went to press, the 80 or so members were due to gather at their headquarters, at Dagenham and Redbridge Football Club, to mark 75 years since the formation of the Dagenham branch of the Royal Naval Old Comrades Association (RNOCA).

The RNOCA was born in a restaurant in Whitehall in early 1935, and little over a year later Dagenham joined the growing list of branches.

The ages of members range from mid-20s (still serving) to mid-80s (not serving but not through choice).

As well as supporting each other, Dagenham shipmates offer help for other local and national military charities, including TS Hurricane, the Hornchurch and Upminster Sea Cadet unit.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our January edition (right) was HMS Shoulton, which – according to *Jane's Fighting Ships* and the Ton Class Association – was converted to a minehunter in 1963, a year before sister ships including HMS Kirkliston.

The winner of our £50 prize was K Clark, of Whitchurch, Hampshire.

This month's mystery ship (pictured above) was a destroyer which was sunk as she bravely fought to protect an aircraft carrier from two German battlecruisers early in World War 2 – before she sank, one of her torpedoes badly damaged one of the German vessels.

Only one member of her ship's company survived.

What was her name, and what was the name of the carrier she was escorting?

We have removed her name and



pennant number from the picture.

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, *Navy News*, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH. Coupons giving the correct answer will go into a prize draw to establish a winner. Closing date for entries is April 11 2011. More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our May edition. The competition is not open to *Navy News* employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 193

Name

Address

My answers



● Members of the HMS Cardigan Bay Association with their hosts on board the namesake RFA vessel

MEMBERS of the HMS Cardigan Bay Association visited their RFA namesake at the invitation of the auxiliary landing ship's captain.

The 22-strong group spent an enjoyable afternoon on board, taking a tour around the ship – and being amazed by the advances in technology and her capabilities.

Capt Paul Minter, Chief Officer (X) Cdr Martin Gould, Navigating Officer 1/O Martin Jones, together with his PRO Joe Anderson, who coordinated the visit, looked after the group exceedingly well, said association chairman S/M Ron Binnmore.

After the tour, the group dined on board and were presented with a medallion to commemorate our visit; in return S/M Ron presented Capt Minter with two copies of

a book entitled *Memories of a Frigate*, written by S/M Gordon Green, a potted history of HMS Cardigan Bay during her service.

The link between the original Cardigan Bay and the RFA is strongly maintained by both sides.

Members attended the launch of the RFA in Glasgow and her dedication ceremony in Portland, though she has been deployed in the Middle East in recent years.

On behalf of the association S/M Ron thanked Capt Minter for allowing the visit, adding that if he ever needed any extra crew members to wash down the upper decks, polish the brass or make the tea, he need only to call upon the Association as they would be delighted to assist whilst at sea during a short journey.



Spalding ensures roses will bloom

ATTENDING the Peace Garden service at Ayscoughfee Hall in Spalding last August, the chairman of Spalding branch noted that the rose bushes were looking a little tired, with old, outgrown and, in places, dead shrubs.

S/M Keith Crawford, who was accompanied by his wife Yvonne, felt inspired to investigate ways of getting them replaced, and an initial meeting with the South Holland and District Council Parks and Leisure Department gave S/M Keith the green light.

Following a chance meeting at the Harrogate Flower Show with Chris and Margaret Styles, the owners of Style Roses at Holbeach, S/M Keith met up again with Chris again at the Peace Garden at Ayscoughfee, and Chris agreed that the roses were beyond redemption.

He also offered to look into ways of helping.

"To our great surprise and joy, Chris and Margaret offered to donate all the roses required to renew the beds," said S/M Keith.

"Considering there are over 180 rose bushes in the beds this was indeed an incredible gesture, and one for which we cannot thank them enough.

"Further discussions with Dan the gardener revealed that he would be hard-pressed to remove all the old bushes, prepare the beds and plant the new ones.

"It was without difficulty that we got together a team of ex-Servicemen, devotees to the Peace Garden.

"Armed with forks and spades we all set about and removed the old bushes under the guidance of Dan, which paved the way for him to prepare the beds ready for the planting of the new rose bushes."

Early last month saw the start of the planting programme, giving the roses ample time to develop and flower in time for this year's Peace Service, in August.

"We would like to express our gratitude to Chris and Margaret of Style Roses, as without their generosity none of this could have happened."

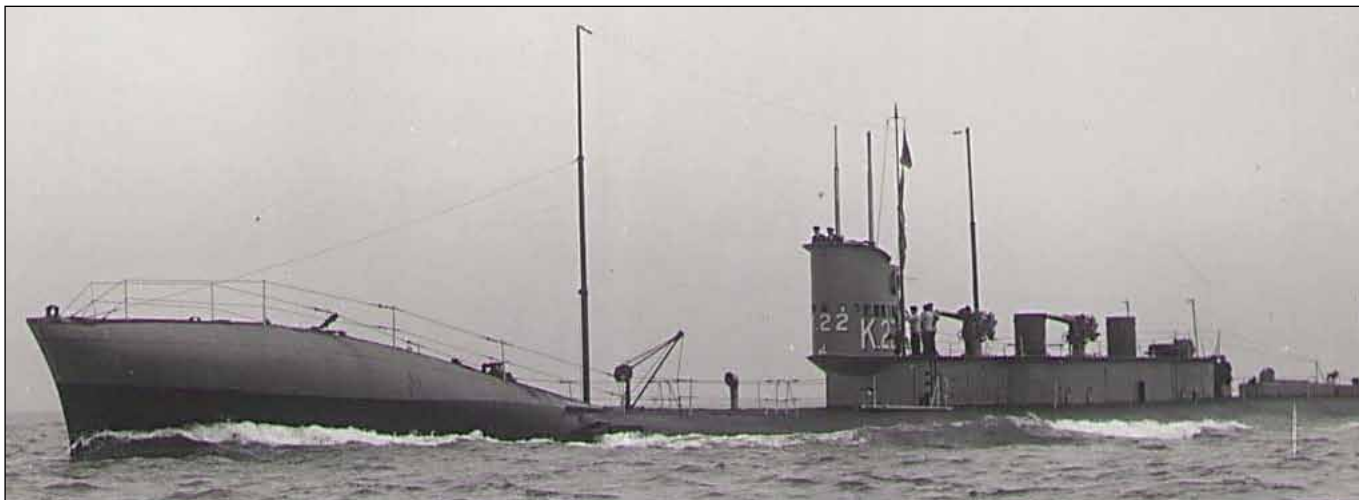
The rose diggers included S/Ms Terry Carter and Terry Day, two members from each of the Parachute Regiment Association and the Royal Lincolnshire Association, a member of the Royal British Legion, Dan the head gardener and his team.

Also critical to the project were M Grimwood of Animal Feeds Long Sutton for the donation of the weed control membrane, and their tea lady Audrey.

There was also a special thanks to Yvonne for donating the plaque, designed and manufactured by Eric Parker and his team at Holbeach Memorials.



● Pictured holding a precious item of Naval paraphernalia is S/M Albert Quick, who turned 90 at the end of last year. The valuable item is not, as you probably thought, the *Navy News*, but an unusual gold ring bought for him by his offspring. The ring has his name and a Naval anchor on one side, and his RN Service number and a White Ensign on the other. Albert served in the thick of the fighting in the Mediterranean in HMS Kelvin during World War 2, but his scrapes didn't put off his family – two of his four children went on to join the Andrew.



● K13 pictured after World War 1 – the boat was salvaged after sinking in 1917 and renamed K22

Service remembers victims of K-boat

SAILORS, ex-submariners and Sea cadets gathered at Faslane Cemetery at the end of January to mark the 94th anniversary of the K13 submarine disaster.

Mustering at the memorial obelisk, the participants took a moment to remember the 32 people who died when the K13 sank in the waters of the Gareloch on January 29 1917.

Around 60 people attended the memorial, including members of the Submariners Association, led by national president Admiral Sir James Perowne.

Many had travelled some distance to take part, from Northern Ireland, Manchester, Barrow, Aberdeen and Lincoln, amongst other places.

Also paying their respects were members of the Royal British Legion, and Clyde Naval Base representatives Capt Philip Buckley, from Faslane Flotilla, and Base Executive Officer Cdr Ian Riches.

"It was a very poignant occasion," said Cdr Riches, "and one which drew a tremendous turn-out to pay their respects.

"The memorial began at HM Naval Base Clyde, where we held a church service led by Fr Andrew McFadden, Faslane Flotilla's Chaplain.

"Then we made our way to the cemetery where there was a wreath-laying.

"Members of TS Neptune Sea Cadet unit rang a ship's bell 32 times, once for every one of those who lost their lives."

Cdr Riches continued: "The K13 disaster may be over 90 years in the past, but there is a strong sense of brotherhood and community in the Submarine Service, one which keeps us coming back here to remember the events of January 1917."

Back then the Royal Navy Submarine Service was in its



● Respects are paid at Faslane Cemetery to the 32 victims of K13, which sank in Gareloch in 1917

Picture: LA(Phot) Nick Crusham

infancy and K13 was the height of underwater technology.

The fastest submarine of its day, capable of more than 20 knots on the surface, the steam-powered K-class were designed to work with the surface fleet.

K13 was built by Clydeside builders Fairfields, but she exemplified the problems which dogged the class, bringing them the soubriquet 'Calamity-class'.

Disaster struck when the vessel took on water as she dived in the Gareloch, flooding her boiler room and plunging her to the bottom of the loch.

Although 32 people died in the disaster, another 48 found themselves trapped onboard the stricken vessel with no way out.

It was up to the captain of K13, Lt Cdr Godfrey Herbert, to come up with a rescue solution – and

the solution was both risky and audacious.

Someone would climb into the conning tower, flood it, and then open the hatch.

A bubble of compressed air would rise to the surface and with it the brave volunteer who, once picked up, would pass on vital information to aid the rescue effort.

That volunteer was Cdr Francis Goodhart, captain of sister submarine K14, who had been onboard to witness the sea trials.

Lt Cdr Herbert accompanied Cdr Goodhart to the conning tower, where he would release the vessel's high-pressure air.

As planned, Cdr Goodhart was propelled upwards through the hatch, but such was the force that Lt Cdr Herbert lost his grip and was swept upwards moments later.

He reached the surface alive; however, Cdr Goodhart was not so fortunate – the courageous officer was later found drowned, having been knocked unconscious and caught in the submarine's superstructure.

Using Lt Cdr Herbert's expert knowledge, the rescuers were able to send down divers to attach an air-line to the vessel.

A cable was then passed beneath K13's hull, raising her up enough to cut a hole in the bow and rescue the survivors.

That was not the end of her problems – she was eventually salvaged and renamed K22, but seriously damaged at the so-called Battle of May Island in early 1918 when a large-scale fleet exercise went disastrously wrong, resulting in the loss of more than 100 submariners.



● Referring to the article on HMS Jervis Bay in the December edition of *Navy News*, Frank Farmer sent the above picture of a memorial in Hamilton, Bermuda, dedicated to the ship, which left the island for Halifax with a small convoy to join HX84. According to Frank, each year on November 11 the RNA, Sea Cadets and other organisations lay wreaths at the memorial in memory of the men who lost their lives in the ship

Coastal Forces on DVD

THE history and role of the RN's little ships is placed in the spotlight by a new documentary DVD.

A *History of the Royal Navy's Coastal Forces* records the activities of Coastal Forces craft operating in areas stretching from Iceland to the Arakan coast in Burma, and as well as some archive footage never before seen, includes interviews with veterans.

At the height of World War 2 around 1,750 boats were involved, manned and supported by more than 25,000 men and women, operating more than 50 bases at home and overseas.

The Coastal Forces Heritage Trust has arranged for the film to be produced "in order to support the memory of all those who served in the Royal Navy's 'little ships' throughout two world wars and until the decommissioning of the last Coastal Forces base in the late 1950s.

"It is the main objective of the Trust to ensure a record exists of this small but highly-effective section of the Royal Navy so that the people and the boats in which they served are not forgotten."

In his review of the DVD, Rear Admiral Michael Stacey – who served in Coastal Forces as a young officer in the late 1940s – said it was the men, and women in support roles, which were the essential element in the story.

"These craft were manned by very young officers of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve and their Hostilities Only ratings," said the Admiral.

"With outstanding bravery, great versatility, and carrying responsibilities way beyond their years, they fought in boats on light wooden construction, laden with ammunition and high-octane fuel, generally at night, in close combat and at high speed.

"It is not surprising that casualties were severe and that awards for bravery were frequent."

The three-hour DVD costs £14.99 (including p&p), and is available from Maritime Books, Lodge Hill, Liskeard PL14 4EL, tel 01579 343663, www.navybooks.com

For more information on the Coastal Forces Heritage Trust see their website at www.coastal-forces.org.uk

Local bus duo meet an expert

STOURBRIDGE branch's intrepid bus travellers have been at it again – and have also met the real expert in the field.

In January last year we reported how S/Ms Alan Beasley and Norman Treece made the journey from the Midlands to Plymouth by local public transport for less than £4, using their bus passes.

"We have since done a similar journey by going to Chatham during May Bank Holiday, this time taking another of our 80-year-old barmptots with us, S/M Barry Billingham," said S/M Alan.

"However, these two feats have now been surpassed by a couple of Black Country lads going from John o'Groats to Lands End in aid of the Cancer Research charity."

This particular trip took the form of a race, with one man using his special concession bus pass and the other on a bike – and the bike won by the narrow margin of three hours.

"To show respect for their efforts I invited them to our January mess night to give a photographic presentation of their exploits," said S/M Alan.

"This was well-received by our members and thoroughly enjoyed.

"Even though there were only 17 members in attendance that night we all dug deeply into our pockets and raised a further £75 for the charity."

Voices of the Holocaust

THE National Memorial Arboretum has commemorated Holocaust Memorial Day using the theme of 'Untold Stories'.

The date – January 27 – is marked internationally as it was the anniversary of the day in 1945 on which the Soviet Army liberated the largest Nazi concentration camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Although millions of stories are untold, those of the millions who died in the Holocaust and subsequent genocides, the initiative encourages people to listen to and learn from the voices the stories which can be told.

That includes the story of Holocaust survivor Ibi Ginsburg, who said: "We carry on telling our stories because we were eye witnesses.

"The most important thing is to tell people so this can never happen

again."

The Arboretum, part of the Royal British Legion family of charities, acknowledged Holocaust Memorial Day as part of its daily Act of Remembrance, with a reading of the Statement of Commitment and the lighting of candles.

Visitors also had the opportunity to visit the tree dedicated to diarist Anne Frank, who died in the Bergen-Belsen camp at the age of 15.

Every year her haunting tree has its blossoms removed before they bloom to symbolise the taking of young life.

The Act of Remembrance is observed daily in the Millennium Chapel at 1am.

The Arboretum is open every day from 9am to 5pm (or dusk if earlier).

Entry is free but donations are appreciated.

Coniston calling

IF ANYONE should be intrigued by the name of Coniston in the email system, the Coniston crew is the MCM1 Squadron Sandown-class crew who are without a hull.

MCM1 still runs an eight crew system to fulfil MCMV commitments to Telic and other operations, but with the decommissioning of Walney there are now only seven hulls in the squadron.

The crew that is temporarily without a hull – currently MCM1 Crew 3 who have recently returned from HMS Grimsby in the Gulf – is known as Coniston crew.

The Coniston company can be found in offices by the MCMV jetties at Clyde Naval Base.

Personnel are requested to add the Coniston crew email address for Fleet-wide emails where appropriate.

Fun in the Forces

COMIC Relief have put a shout out to the Armed Forces to find their funny bones once more.

The Red Nose charity said: "Every year the British Armed Forces show fantastic support and we'd like to encourage you, your colleagues, friends and family to do the same again to support this year's event."

Red Nose Day takes place on Friday March 18.

Find out more at www.rednoseday.com, emailing r.glanville@comicerelief.com, or calling 0207 820 2465.

FAB breaks for families

A NEW website has been launched for Families' Activity Breaks for bereaved military families.

The service offers families the chance to go on an activity holiday with people who have suffered similar losses.

Staffed by volunteers from all three Services and MOD civil servants, this is the third year FAB will be providing holidays to families which have suffered loss.

Find out more at the new website <http://fabcamps.org.uk>.

DRST departs

THE Divisional Regimental Support Team (DRST) has been replaced by the Navy Command Executive Team (NCXT) and the Equality and Diversity Investigation Team (E&DIT) has been replaced by the Complaints Investigation and Mediation Team (CIMT). 2011 DIN 01-023 gives full details of the role changes.

New 2-6 DVD is out now

THE next 2-6 DVD should be with units this month, and can now be viewed online at RNCom.

The main elements of this edition are: allowances, with contributions from the Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Charles Montgomery; IPDT (Individual Pre-Deployment Training) run by the RN Mounting Centre; and a farewell to HMS Ark Royal.

It's your 2-6

NEED to get your message across to the rest of the RN?

The 2-6 TV DVD and Navy News pages are here to spread the word. Your thoughts and opinions are invaluable.

Please forward any constructive ideas about what should be covered to:

■ RN IC hub – 93832 8809, 93832 8821, FLEET-DCS-INFO-Media@Mailbox

■ Pauline Aquilina, 9621 85984

Pauline Aquilina is also the first point of contact for the Royal Navy facebook site. Search for Royal Navy and follow the Service online.



Royal rates top in NATO

ROYAL Marine WO1 (Corps RSM) Marc Wicks beat off tough competition from within the NATO alliance to become the Senior Non-Commissioned Officer at NATO Headquarters in Norfolk, Virginia, in the US.

In October 2010 the appeal went out to the 28 countries of the NATO Alliance to put forward one or more candidates for the post at NATO Headquarters, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT).

WO1 Wicks was chosen to compete as the Naval service candidate against the other branches of the British military. Successful, he was then put forward to SACT as the UK's nomination.

A short list of 13 from within the Alliance was whittled down to four – Netherlands, Slovenia, Canada and the UK – and the final interview took

place in January at the Norfolk Headquarters.

And in July, WO1 Wicks and his family move out to the USA as he takes up his new role.

The senior NCO gave thanks to all the people who had helped him in his preparation and the senior officers who had supported him in his bid.

He said: "It has been a long process with much commitment and study to understanding the intricacies of the NATO Alliance, but obviously worth it."

"I am particularly pleased for the Naval Service and especially the Senior Rates and Non-Commissioned Officers of our service, as it shows that we should never give up our pursuit for greater challenges, further reach and know that we can have important influence at the highest of levels."



Kim tells the minister the NFF perspective

ON FEBRUARY 8, the Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans, Andrew Robathan MP, chaired his scheduled meeting with all three Armed Forces Families Federations, writes Jane Williams of the Naval Families Federation.

The meeting provides an opportunity for him to hear what is being talked about by the families supporting their loved ones within the Armed Forces and assists him in gaining a whole picture of how families balance operational commitments with home life.

The running order of the meeting saw our counterparts in the Army Families Federation and the RAF Families Federation bring forward subjects such as housing, voting, healthcare and the Armed Forces Covenant, which gave the NFF the opportunity to deliver an overview of just how the operational tempo and RN/RM commitments make their impact.

This is a slightly trimmed version of what Kim Richardson actually said to the Minister:

"IT IS eight months since we met with you last and a lot has happened during that time.

In speaking last I will endeavour to avoid repetition of the issues my colleagues have so eloquently raised with you.

I am also more acutely conscious than ever before that I am speaking on behalf of the Senior Service which also occupies that unenviable position of being the smallest Service.

As an aside Minister, in the seven years I have been doing this job, I have never had so much contact from families asking me when I am seeing you and wanting me to pass a message on.

The issues and concerns of Royal Navy and Royal Marines families are no less important than RAF families and Army families, so I am forewarning you that when speaking about Naval Service families today and in the immediate future I am likely to sound more anchor-faced than usual.

I would like to start with some positives. Introduction of the pupil premium is great news for our families in England and most welcome.

In time I would like to see best practice on how the money has been spent shared amongst all schools.

The work of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) Independent Medical Expert Group (IMEG) has been efficient, measured and professional.

Our families are fortunate to have had the time and expertise of Sir Tony Newman Taylor and his eminent colleagues.

The message that goes out to the wider civilian medical community is that the MOD cares and is engaged.

The skill set required to monitor the findings of the IMEG is in place.

I have a request on behalf of the families of the injured, Minister, whilst we are in Afghanistan, the work of this group must be allowed to continue.

It is still early days in terms of how we care for our injured and lessons are being learned all the time; I see the contribution the IMEG makes as a work in progress.

As you know, the Naval Service family is, in my view, extraordinary.

I am told that at the height of World War 2 the Royal Navy found themselves at sea for around 50 per cent of the time.

In 1999, ignoring time in refit or major docking periods, our destroyers and frigates were at sea for 37 per cent of the time.

Today 2011, it's 68 per cent: nearly double and considerably more than during World War 2.

3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines deploys to Afghanistan again in April. They are the first Brigade to return for the fourth time.

Today our Naval Service personnel are expected to spend up to 660 days in three years away from their home port, and therefore their families.

This length of separation is much higher and more frequent than either the RAF or Army undertake.

I have yet to understand why. Our families don't understand it either.

Our lifestyle is the least mobile, least dependant and the cheapest in terms of allowances. Having a serving person away from home is a reality for our families.

But, harmony really isn't harmonious across the three Services and this anomaly is most hard felt in joint areas where the Navy is rubbing shoulders with the other two Services.

So how are our families? Honestly?

Problems with mouldy houses, childcare, dentists etc seem to fade into the background when faced with the uncertainty of whether you have a job in the future. Pensions and where you are going to live actually become a focus for you as you plan for what-ifs.

I met a really smashing aircraft handler recently. He and his family have, in the past, accepted that long deployments, separation and the inability to plan life was part and parcel of 'life in a blue suit'.

Headline SDSR and allowance announcements have been made. The devil is in the detail.

Many of our families are unable to grasp how more cuts can possibly be made. They are also concerned about the speed at which these changes are being made.

So back to our aircraft handler, he is married to a civil servant who also doesn't know what the future holds for her, in effect a double whammy.

He has two children, aged six months, and three years. He joined up at 16. He loves the Navy and he loves his job but he has found that the tension at home has increased and the subject of the what-ifs has become taboo.

His wife won't talk about it, she has said that they will deal with things as and when they have to. He admitted to being scared about what the future holds for him and his family.

This guy is one of many who

could find out whilst away from home that he doesn't have a job. How he shares that news with his family from a distance is not something that bears thinking about.

I understand that this is the beginning of a long process but for some of our people the worry about the future is affecting them now. I believe this is where we have a wider role to play.

Talking to the people who engage with our families, and making them aware of the challenges they are facing now, whilst acknowledging that civvy street is having its own difficulties, has never been so important.

I received a letter this week from the wife of a serving person. I would like to read you a couple of sections from it as she is speaking for herself and her neighbours on the patch. It is worth a listen.

"I am a Naval wife of 13 years with three small children. My husband is driven by a sense of duty to his country, which I admire and respect."

"Although the Navy is not always seen, it is always working hard. During his time away in various ships, my husband has protected Iraqi Strategic Assets and assisted with amphibious tasking in the Gulf."

"He has provided relief from natural disasters abroad, taken part in anti-piracy and anti drug smuggling operations and in any spare time available the ships have hosted foreign dignitaries and painted orphanages by way of patriotic flag waving."

"In home waters he has taken part in patrols as part of EU policy on fishery protection and anti-terrorism patrols in the Irish Sea."

"These commitments have meant that my husband has been away for over 2,500 days (more than 50 per cent of their married life) and at some very key moments in the lives of his family."

"A typical six to nine month deployment will be preceded by a two to three month period of work up and sea trials, in home waters but away from home."

"As a family we make sacrifices every day without complaint; missed birthdays and Christmases, yet another family holiday without Daddy, difficult decisions to be made, illness and bereavement endured alone."

"Many of us have also been unable to sustain our own careers due to the unpredictability of our lives or buy our own homes, all things that most professional people would take for granted."

"You will not see us tied to railings or hurling missiles at police."

"I would not claim to be facing the same traumas as a wife whose husband is on the front-line in Afghanistan but our sacrifices are none the less real. (I should add, they are also long-term, in this case 13 years.)"

"We are resigned to this life and make the best of it and are proud of it too. What we expect in return is that

decisions affecting our lives, take our lives into consideration too."

"Ships have already been removed from service and there is talk of redundancies, promotion and pay freezes and a change to the pension."

"I feel that our future is very uncertain and that our sacrifices may have been for nothing."

"The Navy is not the whirl of cocktail parties and balls depicted in post-war movies, it is gritty, hard working and at full stretch."

"I admire the mature way that the Government has tackled the economy, cuts needed to be made, it is naïve to keep saying yes without having the means to pay."

"The defence review felt more financial than strategic and the Navy was hit the hardest."

"The Navy has already tightened its belt as tightly as it can, it is struggling to meet its already tough demands but it will continue to do so, at what personal cost?"

In conclusion Minister I would like to acknowledge that what I have said is difficult to listen to, it is also difficult to say.

But that is how it is. Minister, you are our champion!

Our website has a poll that asks the question 'Have the recent announcements on pay and allowances made you reconsider your future in the Naval Service'? 80 per cent of respondents have said it has.

If this translates across and we see families putting pressure on serving personnel to leave, the budget deficit will pale into insignificance when we can't deliver operational capability.

I would like to ask you, Minister, to come and hear these views for yourself so today, I am extending an invitation to come and see us at Castaway House, meet the Naval service charities working there and talk to some families who would welcome an opportunity to engage with you directly.

I have my diary with me..."

We look forward to booking that diary date with the Minister and he has assured us it will take place, so whatever your comment or concern may be, please get in touch.

Your experiences form the basis of our discussions.

The NFF can be contacted via: e-mail: admin@nff.org.uk, Tel: 02392 654374 or write to: Castaway House, 311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth, PO2 8RN.

■ THE Naval Families Federation have launched a new e-update.

This email update provides a short, snappy roundup of news and information of interest to Royal Navy and Royal Marines families.

It cherry-picks information from various sources and brings it all together in one neat little page. It will be issued every other month.

If you would like to join the e-mailing list please e-mail info@nff.org.uk with your name and contact details

where to look

DEFENCE INTERNAL BRIEFS

06/11: Introduction of Personal Clothing System: UK Armed Forces will be issued with the new Personal Clothing System (PCS) to replace Combat Soldier 95 uniform (CS95).

07/11: Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) Web Survey: All Reservist personnel are invited to participate in the Future Reserves 2020 Web Survey. The FR20 Study is about ensuring Defence has the right balance of Reservists within the Whole Force construct, and that they are used in the most appropriate roles.

GALAXIES

Galaxy 05-2011: Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) – Independent Review and Survey

DEFENCE INSTRUCTIONS AND NOTICES

DIN 2011 DIN01-018: Official and pastoral visits to Joint Medical Command Role 4 Units. This DIN replaces DIN 2009 DIN01-072, DIN 2009 DIN01-206, and DIN 2008 DIN01-158.

DIN 2011 DIN01-022: Commitment Bonus (CB) 2011 Scheme. This DIN details Commitment Bonus (CB) – Details of revised values for those joining their respective Service on or after January 20 2011.

DIN 2011 DIN01-023: Changes to the names, roles and organisation of the DRST and E&DIT. This DIN contains a notification of changes to the names, roles and organisation of the DRST and E&DIT.

DIN 2011 DIN01-025: 53rd International Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes. This DIN supersedes DIN 2010 DIN01-045

DIN 2011 DIN01-027: HIVE Information Service – Future Structure. This DIN details the arrangements for the future structure of the HIVEs after December 1 2010.

DIN 2011 DIN01-028: Revision of Cost of Living Addition (COLA) Salary Bands. This DIN supersedes DIN 2010 DIN01-017. Details of revision of Cost of Living Addition (COLA) Salary Bands.

DIN 2011 DIN01-032: Revised Roles of the Fighting Arm Command Warrant Officers. This DIN gives notification of change to the roles and organisational structure of the Fighting Arm Command Warrant Officers, effective from January 24 2011

DIN 2011 DIN01-036: Day of Prayer for the Armed Forces – Thursday June 23 2011. This DIN contains details and arrangements for the Day of Prayer for the Armed Forces to be held at St Clement Danes, the Strand, London WC2R 1DH.

DIN 2011 DIN01-037: The introduction of Additional Paterly/Adoption Leave and Pay for members of the Regular Armed Forces. This DIN sets out the tri-Service policy for the introduction of Additional Paternity Leave and Pay for members of the Regular Armed Forces.

DIN 2011 DIN01-044: Census 2011 and how it applies to the Services. To provide guidance on the responsibilities of the Services to assist in the conduct of Census 2011 across the UK. Completion instructions for Service personnel and their families.

DIN 2011 DIN01-045: Application of the Downgrading and Naval Service Medical Board of Survey Process to personnel on the Untrained Strength. This DIN details the requirement for personnel on Untrained Strength who are unfit to continue full training are to be downgraded and referred to NSMBOS.

DIN 2011 DIN01-046: The Command Qualification One (CQ1) Process and Standards of Training, Certification and Watch Keeping (STCW) 1995. This DIN describes the changes that have been made to the RN Command Qualification(1) process and the RN/Maritime Coastguard Agency (MCA) Memorandum of Understanding on STCW.

DIN 2011 DIN01-047: The Command Competencies Framework governing suitability for Sea Command. This DIN supersedes DIN 2009 DIN01-202. This DIN contains details of the Command Competencies Framework governing suitability for Sea Command

DIN 2011 DIN01-048: RN and RM Officers: 2012 Transfer, Promotion & Sea, Air and Command Selection Boards – Instructions to ROs and administrators. This DIN supersedes DIN 2010 DIN01-055. This DIN details the transfer, promotion and command eligibility criteria, selection board and announcement dates, and detailed appraisal reporting instructions.

ROYAL NAVY TEMPORARY MEMORANDA Issue 01/11 RNTM 018/11: Seasonal Influenza – Vaccination and Treatment

Issue 02/11 RNTM 022/11: HMS Cumberland decommissioning and disposal

Issue 02/11 RNTM 025/11: RNFT/BFT Temporary Extension (Assignment) Procedure

Issue 02/11 RNTM 026/11: Change to Seaboard Coxswain Training – Pacific Mk2 and Jetcap 24

Issue 02/11 RNTM 027/11: Nationality – Notification of delays in processing Fiji passports

Issue 02/11 RNTM 031/11: HMS Ark Royal Decommissioning and Disposal

Issue 02/11 RNTM 032/11: Mathematics aptitude prior to attending WE LET Career Course

Issue 02/11 RNTM 035/11: OPDEF Rectification Signal Format – Surface Ships and Submarines

Issue 02/11 RNTM 038/11: RN/RM Officers Promotion Section – OJAR Checks

Redundancy updates

FOR all information on the Naval Service Redundancy Programme, including the latest DINS, Galaxies and FAQs, visit the Redundancy site on the RN webpage of the Defence intranet.

If you are a manager of civilian staff, the Permanent Secretary Ursula Brennan, has written to all MOD civilian staff about the forthcoming Voluntary Early Release Scheme.

If you manage staff who are not currently working in a MOD establishment (secondment, career break, etc.) please make sure this message is passed on to them. More detail in Defence Internal Brief 05/2011.

Multi-terrain takes over

ISSUE has begun of the new Personal Clothing System (PCS) to replace Combat Soldier 95 (CS95) to British forces.

The new uniform and kit uses multi-terrain pattern on all camouflage items, and other items are in the traditional khaki.

PCS in full consists of combat uniform, ancillary items and waterproof clothing. The combat uniform replaces the camouflage lightweight jacket, trousers and windproof smock, and ancillary items and waterproofs replace the T-shirt, fleece and waterproofs of the current CS95 system.

The design of the new clothing items in the PCS has been changed to reflect developments in material technology and lessons learnt from operational deployments.

Combat footwear is outside the PCS changes, but a competition to replace the combat assault boot is taking place separately.

It is expected that this will provide a choice of commercially-available boots in the same manner that desert boots are provided for operations.

However these will be provided in brown as research has shown that black items compromise the performance of multi-terrain pattern camouflage.

The multi-terrain pattern camouflage was introduced in April last year, and replaces both woodland and desert disruptive-pattern material for use in training and operations.

This new design in camouflage offers the best performance across the widest range of environments – and will remain only available for military issue. It will not be released for the manufacture of items for commercial sale.

Among the guiding principles in the design changes has been the need to offer a layered clothing system to allow for temperature regulations, but also the requirement for protection such as body armour.

Issue of the new combat uniform began this year in line with Front Line Command plans. New recruits will start receiving the PCS from October 2011. It is expected to complete the roll-out by April 2013.

Ancillary items will be available to issue from the middle of this year. Personnel previously issued with CS95 will only receive the new items for operations or to replace CS95 equivalents that have worn out.

The current CS95 ancillary items are fully compatible with the PCS combat uniform and will remain in use as long as stocks are available.

The new PCS does not feature the CS95 size ranges but has used industry-standard size ranges which will provide greater flexibility for individuals.

Full discussion of the elements of the PCS and how it should be worn can be found in DIB 2011/06: Introduction of Personal Clothing System.

Afghan report

DEFENCE Secretary Dr Liam Fox delivered in February the latest assessment of progress in Afghanistan to Parliament.

He focused on the security progress in central Helmand, where the majority of UK forces operate. He stressed that Afghanistan has 401 districts, but 60 per cent of the violence occurs in nine of these, eight of which are in Helmand and Kandahar.

His full speech can be found on the MOD website and in Defence Internal Brief 08/11.

Commando first, specialist next



Drafty's corner

MOST of you will have noticed that the Corps is now rapidly approaching 'Full Strength', this is the position where we have the right number of people but not necessarily in the right rank or specialisation, by Lt Col Simon Fuller, Corps Drafting Officer.

We currently have a significant surplus of General Duties (GD) manpower whilst continuing to manage shortages in a number of specialisations.

'Full Manning' has people of the right rank and specialisation which in the manning world is the 'nirvana'.

NPT(RM) have been conducting a review of Royal Marines Specialist Qualifications (SQs), aimed at identifying a better way of delivering the specialist skills required by the Corps to meet both current, and contingent, operations in the future.

The result of that review will make us a 'true Corps of Specialists', improve junior leadership and provide greater SQ sustainability.

Currently we regularly rely on the Direct Specialisation Scheme (DSS) to fill shortages.

At present recruits passing out of training expect to serve at least 12 months in a unit free from DSS. This is too short and is often, for numerous reasons, not achieved.

In addition, by focusing on those ranks who have been in a unit for longer than 12 months, DSS frequently targets experienced Marines including section 2ICs, snipers and recce operators.

Each of these individuals requires significant investment and time which, given the current operational tempo, makes them difficult to replace.

The system being developed will therefore seek to extend the time spent in a unit, protect people with key skills and improve junior leadership.

In the new system it is proposed that ranks will spend between 18 months and two years in a unit in a combat company. After that everyone will be expected to gain skills at the SQ-3 level (although how and when ranks make their choice of specialisation is still to be determined).

This will include increasing SQ-3 opportunities so that snipers, machine gunners, and possibly door gunners become Platoon Weapon 3s, and recce operators becoming Mountain Leader 3s.

Furthermore we will introduce a Physical Training Instructor 3s and possibly a Drill 3.

Specialising everyone will ensure that the right number of specialists are available in each unit at the SQ-3 level.

It will broaden the number of SQs available to Marines and bring some key skills into SQs. This will give us far greater SQ resilience.



Junior leadership and the allocation of the section 2IC will also change.

Under the proposed system each section 2IC will be a broadening opportunity for a rank who has completed 18-24 months in an SQ 3 position.

Effectively this will mean each Section 2IC will have been in the Corps for approximately four years. In addition, we are assessing whether a 'fire team commander's course' will be created, all of which should significantly improve junior leadership.

What you will have noticed is that everyone will receive extra skills to become a specialist and therefore you will have to specialise to be promoted and as a consequence, in time, all GD positions above Marine will be included in other SQs.

This clearly has implications for the GD specialisation and work is ongoing to determine how we will manage senior ranks who are GD now.

These measures, by offering longer in a unit and thereafter far greater broadening opportunities, ie, providing combat section commander and combat troop sergeant opportunities to more SQs, will make some of the current shortage SQs more appealing and therefore assist SQ sustainability.

Junior leadership will be improved and many of the key skills attained at the Marine level will be protected.

What I hope you will also recognise, is that by enabling everyone to serve as a Marine in a unit, and by giving greater broadening opportunities from LCpl upwards to SQs, we will ensure that we all remain 'Commando first' and now SQ second, thus making us a true Corps of specialists.

More information on 'Commando First' will be circulated soon.

If you have any queries please speak to your Career Manager or Specialisation Advisor.

2SL speaks on CEA survey

THE Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Charles Montgomery has sent out a message to the Naval service regarding the Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) independent review and survey.

He said: "Since that announcement [of the CEA review survey] there have been requests for further information and better access to the survey from many Service personnel in receipt of this allowance."

"In addition over the past few days there has been a much wider debate and speculation in the media about the future of this form of financial support to members of the Armed Forces and their families."

He continued: "I take this opportunity to reassure all those Naval Service personnel affected or interested that all the single Service Principal Personnel Officers are paying close attention to the current public scrutiny of this allowance."

"I believe that it is right and proper to review CEA at this time, examining both its continued need and the associated governance of such an expensive allowance. It represents about one third of the Departments' total spend on Service personnel allowances."

"We must ensure that it supports, and continues to support, Service personnel and their families who are mobile for Service reasons."

"There may be better value for money ways of doing this and the review will explore them whilst maintaining a very watchful eye for any unintended consequences."

"Whatever the final outcome any change that might take place will take time to implement and therefore it is also wholly appropriate that the current allowance criteria and regulations are examined to ensure they remain fit for purpose."

"I am acutely aware that internal opinion on this allowance is divided so it is extremely important that we encourage an open minded, objective review that focuses on genuine Service requirement not a specific remuneration method."

NFF seeks CEA views

THE government review into Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) raised concern and questions from families across all three Services, writes the Naval Families Federation.

The NFF website has a dedicated feedback button for anyone wishing to register comments www.nff.org.uk.

This is what the Chair NFF, Kim Richardson has said:

"The NFF offers a conduit for the views and concerns of Naval Service families. CEA (formerly known as Boarding School Allowance) is under the microscope again."

Across the three Services, personnel who claim CEA (5,500) and a sample of those who don't (13,500) were asked for a view via a survey.

The question of whether CEA is fit for purpose in its current format was lost in the noise surrounding the questions posed in the survey.

To this end the Army Families Federation have conducted a survey of their own.

The current number of CEA claimants in the Naval Service is 1,026, around three per cent of the Royal Navy, at a cost of £20 million to the RN.

We are not able to ascertain what the statistic would be if we were looking at the percentage of those who are eligible to receive CEA, as we do not have data on numbers of children of serving personnel.

By tradition we do not register births with our Unit Personnel Office unless going overseas or claiming CEA (the Army do).

We have had some contact regarding CEA and I feel it is only fair to let you, the families, know that the current feedback has fallen into two distinct camps:

Those who are all for it, feel it shouldn't be touched, left as is and in some cases should be uplifted.

It is seen as a contributor to operational effectiveness and is vital, in particular for our single serving personnel with children



and for families serving overseas.

There is also a view that CEA should be reviewed as the costs are too high for too few and it is open to abuse.

Some RN/RM families feel that in adopting a static lifestyle they are penalized for being static as this is an allowance linked to mobility.

There is a view that the cost of CEA prevents other allowances from being uplifted which could in turn benefit the static population.

These are uncertain times for the Naval Service. The timing of this survey could not be worse.

This comes on top of concerns over allowance changes, redundancies, pensions, the future of Service Families Accommodation, a two-year pay freeze, the cost of living increases and changes to tax and national insurance.

At what point do we say 'enough'?

We, the NFF, are clear that there is a place for CEA, but our remit is to represent *your* views. We want to hear from you.

Email your comments to admin@nff.org.uk. What do you think?

We will ensure that your views are represented in MOD and also up through the RN Chain of Command.

MOD have undertaken to get the three Families Federations together in mid March to discuss the emerging options and give an opportunity to represent the views of the respective families.

Over to you...

From estates to infrastructure

ON APRIL 1, the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) will come into effect, replacing the existing Defence Estates organisation and encompassing TLP property and facilities management.

Funding and staff will be transferred to DIO between April 1 and March 31 2012. The new organisation is designed to give Armed Forces and their families the best possible facilities in which to live and prepare for operations.

More information can be found in DIBs 09a/11 and 09b/11.

Changes to nature of HIVE

THE HIVE UK & Overseas information service is now delivered on a single-Service basis. The nature of the service stays the same, but each branch of the military will use its HIVEs for its own specific requirements. The HIVE Europe, which covers UK Service personnel

in Germany and Western Europe, remains unchanged.

The RN/RM HIVE service now reports to Fleet's Naval Personal and Family Service (NPFs), and the RN/RM HIVE manager can be contacted on 93785 4644 or CTCRM-LDGR-RNRMHIVE.

Are you affected by the closure of Blueforces?

IT IS understood that Blueforces, a private property company with offices in Colchester Garrison specialising in providing property management and financial services to members of the Armed Forces, has recently announced that it has ceased trading and applied to go into liquidation.

Although it is thought that the majority of its clients were Army personnel it is possible that some Naval Service personnel may be financially prejudiced by this announcement.

Blueforces advertised its services widely, including

in the magazine *Housing Matters* (issued monthly by the Joint Service Housing Advice Office (JSHAO)), on internet sites targeted at members of the Armed Forces, through HIVES and in the family federations' magazines, including *Homeport*.

Although this is an entirely private matter between those affected and the company, exceptionally, given the wide exposure Blueforces has had amongst the Service community, it is considered appropriate to publicise the failure of this company through the Chain of Command.

Commanding Officers may wish to be aware that Blueforces is believed to have held significant sums of money on behalf of individuals and there is scope therefore for those affected to suffer financial hardship.

Personnel who have properties managed by Blueforces may have received a letter stating that the company is now seeking insolvency advice from B&C Associates (contact number 02089 067730); it is possible that there may be a delay in these letters reaching deployed personnel.

If Commanding Officers become aware of personnel affected by this news it is recommended they advise individuals to contact B&C Associates, consider seeking independent legal advice and, if their mortgage is affected, to urgently contact their mortgage provider.

A private support network for those affected has been established at: www.blueonblueforces.co.uk/ www.blueonblueforces.co.uk/Homepage.html

NCHQ point of contact: Cdr N D Bond, SO1 Accommodation, 93832 8819 or 02392 628819



NOTICEBOARD

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Red Lion Foods' Great Hash Off

RED Lion Foods has devised a competition which has been designed to raise awareness of the efforts the firm is making to raise funds for our UK forces' charities and causes.

Red Lion Foods is a different sort of food company. It believes most people want to say thank-you every day to the UK armed forces and their families.

Andrew Gidden, managing director, said: "Red Lion Foods is giving every person in the UK the chance to regularly say 'thank you' and recognise the sacrifices being made for us.

"If households buy just one of their everyday food products from us in their weekly shop we can donate more than £30 million to armed forces charities every year.

"This is equal to the amount raised by Children in Need each year, and an amazing amount of money to help our armed forces."

The Great Hash Off is a competition for four people to each win £1,000 for the best corned beef hash recipe and a chance to be crowned the overall winner.

There will be a £1,000 prize for the best Navy recipe and video and this winner will then go through to

compete against the RAF and Army and the general public for the chance to become overall Hash Off Champion. Their suppliers have kindly donated the prize money.

To enter and to see the full terms and conditions simply go to the Red Lion Foods website at www.redlionfoods.com. Judges will award points based on the recipe quality, location and entertainment.

How it works – the details

Entrants simply need to make a two-minute video of their recipe and

upload it to our website for judges to assess.

The best entries from the RAF, Navy, Army and general public will each win £1,000.

A celebrity chef will cook the four winning recipes for a panel of judges at the Union Jack Club and the overall winner and forces' champion will be chosen.

Entrants must upload their videos by March 31 2011.

■ **See our advert on page 18 for more details.**

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

■ Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to – The Editor, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth. PO1 3HH or email: edit@navynews.co.uk. If you are sending your notice in via email, please include your full address and telephone number.

■ Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.


■ Please send in Reunions at least three months (preferably four) before the month of the event.

■ There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.


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Deaths

Captain Jack Bitmead DSO. Attended the Nautical College, Pangbourne and on the day war broke out was appointed navigating officer of the destroyer Broke that took part in the evacuation of 215,000 British and Allied servicemen and civilians from the ports of western France in 1940 (Operations Cycle and Aerial) and for his part was awarded the Krzyz Walecznych (Cross of Valour). First lieutenant of the lend-lease destroyer Georgetown 1941 then appointed at aged 23 as first lieutenant to Forester escorting the crippled Edinburgh back to Murmansk. Forester was hit by two shells killing her captain, Bitmead assumed command; however Edinburgh was sunk in another U-boat attack later. After Forester had been patched up, he returned to Britain escorting Trinidad, which was attacked; Forester was first alongside to take off casualties. One of the youngest naval officers to be awarded a DSO for taking convoys to and from Murmansk. Took part in a trial to train submarine captains in just six months and undertook four war patrols, but argued that the scheme would not work and reverted to general service. He trained ratings at Collingwood then given command of Meynell in 1944. He commanded the destroyer Mendip in 1947 and Broadsword 1948-50. During the Korean War he was appointed to the Naval Intelligence Division; then to the Joint Services Staff College before joining Mountbatten's staff in Malta in 1953. He commanded Veryan Bay 1955-57 and promoted to captain 1958. After attending the Canadian National Defence College, he took up another appointment in Malta. His last seagoing command was the destroyer Duchess based in Singapore during the Indonesian Confrontation until 1965. In 1967 he was placed on the retired list. December 21. Aged 91.

Lt Cdr 'Uncle' Bill Brook Filer GM. Joined Ganges 1933, after five years at the Barnardos-run Watts Naval School, where he became an Instructor Boy and was also chosen as the best all-round boy of the year. In 1934 he joined Nelson (Home Fleet's West Indies cruise) returning as an Ordinary Seaman. After passing the Seaman Torpedoman's course at Vernon he was drafted to Excellent and qualified as a Diver 2, then joined Penzance in South Africa. He responded to an Admiralty Fleet Order inviting ratings to apply to become pilots in the Fleet Air Arm; awarded his wings he became the first 'flying diver'. Subsequently told that he would be of more value to the war effort as a diver he was demoted from Petty Officer Airman to Leading Seaman and refused transfer to the RAF. As an Acting Petty Officer LTO/Diver he joined Queen Elizabeth two days out of Nova Scotia she was ordered to join the Mediterranean Fleet at Alexandria where he found himself removing bodies from the cruiser Orion. Seconded to the submarine depot ship Medway he qualified as Diver 1 and in 1942 to the shore-based bomb and mine disposal team where he travelled by camel to Ras el Tin near Alexandria to assist in rendering safe and recovering an Italian circling torpedo washed up on the beach; he was awarded the George Medal. Rejoining Medway as Senior Diving Instructor he swam to the destroyer Hero after the ship was struck by three torpedoes and sank within half an hour. After survivors' leave he was drafted to Tedworth qualifying as a 'deep diver' then to Excellent as an instructor where he wrote instructions for underwater demolitions which took him to Volcano at Holmrook Hall (Cumbria). Just over a year later he qualified as a Gunner(G) at Excellent with the rank of Warrant Officer. In 1948 he was appointed to stand by the new deep-diving ship Reclaim as her technical advisor (Lieutenant) and upon completion was appointed First Lieutenant and Chief Diving Officer with his first mission on board to search for the submarine Affray that disappeared April 1951. Affray's identity confirmed, her mast recovered and he was appointed an MBE. His next appointment was to AEDU where he toured the USA to assist in the evaluation and acquisition of diving equipment for the RN. Promoted to Lieutenant Commander he commanded the diving tender Diver and Diving Acceptance Trials Officer at Vernon. He cross-trained as a Clearance Diver before retiring after 29 years service. He was appointed civilian Officer-in-Charge of DTU for the next 20 years. Honorary (life) member of the MCDOA. January 31. Aged 93.

Lt R A Bennett. Eng. Attended Greenwich Hospital School 1927-30 then served the RN 1931-65 at Figgard, Valiant, Southampton, Mauritius, Hecla, Frohisher, Delhi, London, Swiftsure, Indomitable, Newcastle, Vanguard, Courier, Moon, Pincher, Meon, Tracker, Ark Royal and Loch Alvie; also Pembroke, Calliope, Euphrates (Khoramshahr), Canopus, Nelson, Tamar, Drake and Woolwich (Plymouth). He joined MOD (Navy) upon leaving in 1965 and worked for the RN Film Corporation in London and Singapore then the Directorate of Naval Education and Training till 1980. Association of Royal Navy Officers (ARNO). Aged 94.

Michael Anthony 'Pony' Moore. CPO MEM. Served 1956-93 in Eagle, Ark Royal, Cavalier, Zulu, Sultan, Tenby, Penelope, Cambridge, Royal Arthur and Raleigh (Instructor); followed by a further 15 years in the RN Careers Service, HMS Cavalier Association. December 25. Aged 72.

Charles 'Charlie' Ross. L/Stoker. Served 1940-52 in Vimy, Scimitar, Wrestler (mined on D-Day), Cavalier, Loch Quoig, Opportune and Crispin. HMS Cavalier Association. January 19. Aged 90.

Alexander 'Jimmy' Ball. DSM. CERA. Served in Serene (44-47), Edinburgh

(survivor), Fantome and Ark Royal R09. Founder member HMS Serene Association. December 25. Aged 91.

Lt David Hirst RM. Served in Newfoundland 1958-59 also Messina, Bulwark and FOF3 Staff. December 3.

John Parry RM. Served in Newfoundland 1956-58. October 25.

Bernard Owen. PO/EA. Served in Newfoundland 1944-46.

Robert Edmunds. ERA. Served 22 years in Repulse and Royal Oak (survivor). The Royal Oak Association. October 1. Aged 93.

Kenneth Conway. Signalman. Served in Egret, Teviot and Royal Oak (survivor), and minesweepers. The Royal Oak Association. June. Aged 92.

Eric Wingrove. L/Signalman. Served aboard Faulknor and a member of the association. January 18. Aged 88.

Bill Atkinson. Radar Operator. Served 1944-48 in Volage surviving the Corfu Channel mining of 1946 and Verulam 1947 on Palestine Patrol. Corfu Channel Association. January 1. Aged 83.

Henry 'Harry' Booth DSM. PO. Served 1942-46 on Colossus Indian and Western Pacific; witnessed the Japanese surrender in Hong Kong. Awarded DSM for saving a colleague from an on-board fire receiving burns to his legs. Fleet Air Arm Association. January 21. Aged 85.

Lt Cdr William James Prickett. Served 1944-83 at St George, followed by Belfast, submarine service, Mercury, Phoenicia, Pitreavie, Rooke, Duncan, Fearless, FOCAS, SCU Mercury. December 18. Aged 82.

Cyril Bush. POME. Royal Naval Engineer Association. Served 1940-53 in Berwick, LSTs 3019, 163, 3501, Indomitable, Diadem and Brocklesby. January 10.

Fred Atterbury. Stoker PO. Served in Indefatigable 1943-46. Former chairman, secretary and welfare officer of the Royal Naval Engineer Association. Aged 85. February 8.

George Oliver. Leading Seaman. DEMS Gunner 1940-46. Served in 11 merchant and troop ships including Queen Mary. February 4. Aged 93.

Charles 'Ted' Edward Pawsey. Chief Petty Officer. Fleet Air Arm. Series 21 Electrical Artificers. Served 1954-78. January 11.

Alfred L Fordham. Royal Marine Musician and Band Corporal. Alf was a survivor of the sinking of the Royal Oak in Scapa Flow on October 14 1939. In February 1933 he entered the Royal Marine School of Music at Deal as a Band Boy. His first ship was Glorious, which he joined in 1935, seeing service in the Mediterranean. In 1937 at Devonport he joined the Royal Oak, and after the tragedy he took survivors' leave and then returned to Deal for promotion training. This was followed by a short period in Victory, Portsmouth. He then joined the battleship King George V, and was promoted to Band Corporal. To Pembroke, Chatham, in 1944, then joined the cruiser Sussex after refit. Saw service in the Far East until the end of the war. Returning to Chatham in 1946, he was then posted to Excalibur, and served for short period as an acting Bandmaster. In late 1947 he returned to Burford, before joining Gamecock early the next year. Discharged August 1948. HMS Royal Oak Association. Glorious, Ardent and Acasta Association. January 22. Aged 92.

James Russel Whitehead. Joined Dartmouth Naval College at the outbreak of war and as a midshipman went up the coast of Norway in Devonshire to take off the King of Norway and his courtiers, and bring them under heavy bombardment to Britain. His subsequent wartime career was in submarines, first Seawolf, then Voracious in the North Atlantic. After the war he continued with postings to China, Australia, and Malta, and retired as lieutenant commander in 1965 from his last posting to the NATO Undersea Research Agency in Italy, then joined the NATO Research and Technology Agency, Paris. November 19. Aged 89.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION
Jean MacPhail. PO Wren. WW2 Service. Secretary Bridgend branch. December 27. Aged 87.

Joe Payne. Signalman. Served 1944-48 mostly on mine sweepers in the Far East. Bourne RNA and also a founder member of Hereward Probus Club of Bourne. December 20. Aged 84.

S/Lt George Robert 'Bob' Wilson. Survivor from Glen Avon that sank in a Force 9 gale off the Normandy Coast 1944. President Chesham and Amersham branch. January 3. Aged 84.

Jack Young. PO ERA. Served 1943-46 in Furious in Norway and Canada. Bury branch and life member of the Royal British Legion. December 27. Aged 87.

Jack Skinner. Served 1940-46 in Dido (three years) in the Mediterranean supporting the 8th Army, Malta convoys, Battle of Crete, Italian and African campaigns; then Orwell laying mines in Russian waters and supporting Arctic convoys. Author of *A Ship, A Crew of World War 2*. Welfare Officer for a number of years and latterly President of the Mess, Maidstone RNA, member of HMS Dido Association and also had an affiliation with the Royal Australian Naval Association. January 16. Aged 90.

Bertie 'Sticky' Bunn. Stoker mechanic (Engineering branch). Served in Theseus, Centaur and Chichester. Grantham branch. January 5. Aged 79.

Mike 'Bungy' Williams. C/Mech. South Gloucestershire RNA. December 26. Aged 74.

Stanley 'Stan' Paterson. Served with

NAAFI and was Canteen Manager aboard Kenya, he was instrumental in forming the 'Kenya' Association and was life president; also founder member, life president and vice president of Hartlepool RNA. December 21. Aged 85.

William 'Bill' Gardner. Leading Telegraphist. Served 1933-39 Clyde RNRV and 1939-46 RN. Kempenfelt, Faulknor and Howe. Grantham branch. January 27. Aged 93.

Harry Plummer. LH. Torpedoman. Submarine service 1943-46 in Venturer and mentioned in despatches for the part he played in 1945 when serving as a torpedo man he sank U864 (the only time two submerged submarines battled underwater) outside Bergen. This was an important hit as it was carrying German and Japanese scientists along with a secret cargo of jet engines and 60 tons of mercury en-route to Japan; he featured in the BBC Timewatch documentary two years ago highlighting this episode in the war. Middlesex Submariners Association, Chatham RNA and formerly a long serving member of Camberwell branch until moving into RNBT Pembroke House. January 24. Aged 89.

SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION
Philip R Fleming. CRS (RCI). Served 1943-67. Boy seaman at St George, Isle of Man (where his father was a trainer) then Howe 1944 (British Pacific Fleet), Served 1947-58 in submarines Alliance, Ambush, Affray, Sentinel, Seadevil, Truculent, Tiptoe and Tapir. Left submarines and attended communications training at Mercury before joining Eagle on commission to the Far East (Beira Patrol). Middlesex branch. December 31. Aged 83.

Roy Thurston. Leading Seaman. UC3. Served 1951-57 in submarines Alcide and Selene. Derbyshire and Burton on Trent branches. January 11. Aged 79.

Maurice A Caddell. PO UW1. Submarine service 1948-56 in Acheron, Artemis, Affray, Subtle and Telemachus. Gwathack branch. Aged 82.

Lt Cdr Douglas M Craig. Submarine service 1944-47 in Sybil, Vivid and Truculent. Dolphin branch. Aged 87.

Ronald T Jenkins. ME1. Submarine service 1965-68 in Astute, Alcide and Opportune. Plymouth branch. Aged 69.

Cdr Tommy W Lampert. WW2 submarine service in Solent, Tudor and Trenchant. West Scotland branch. Aged 88.

Roy Shenton. FCPO. Elec. Submarine service 1954-79 in Solent, Springer, Tabard, Trump, Finnhale and Resolution. Gosport branch. Aged 77.

ALGERINES ASSOCIATION
Ian Archer. Sto1. Served in Plucky. November 3. Aged 84.

John Dent. Sto. Served in Plucky. December 6. Aged 78.

Stanley Marsh. AB. Served in Courier. December 30. Aged 85.

Edwin Higginbotham. AB. Served in Thisbe. January 19. Aged 85.

Dennis Jewel. AB. Served in Welcome. January 22. Aged 84.

Gordon Forster. ERA. Served in Coquette. January 26. Aged 80.

George Wilkins. AB. Served in Espiegle. January 31. Aged 87.

HMS BELFAST ASSOCIATION
Tony Craythorne. Served on board as EM1 1961-62. 2010.

Ronald Hill. Served on board as Master at Arms 1944-47, September 2.

Robert Swallow. Served on board as Able Seaman 1944-45, October 28.

Denis Watkinson. Served on board as Able Seaman 1944-46. January 20.

FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION
George Charles Mott. Served 1943-46. AF(MW). Served in aircraft carrier Formidable (Far East and Australia), and Naval Air Stations Gosling, Raven, Daedalus, Waxwing, Nabstock, Sparrowhawk. Watford branch. January 4.

Donald Benstead. POAM(A). Served 1941-48. Hitchin branch. February 1.

Ronald Oldham. NA1. Served 1943-46 in Gosling, Heron, 787 NAS, Daedalus, 787 NAS, Sparrowhawk, 787 NAS, Hornbill, 787 NAS. Watford branch. January 10.

Robert Blanchard. LAM(O). Served 1952-64 in Ariel, Ark Royal, Birmingham branch. December 17. Aged 76.

LST & LANDING CRAFT ASSOCIATION
LA Crosswell. Served LST 3025, Bruiser. December.

C J Dart. Served LST 3001. December 22.

L V H Bunch. Served LCA, LCM, Flotilla 669, LCP January 14.

N Magson. Served LST 415. January 27.

Assignments

Lt Col Neil Willson to CTCRM as CO from February 22.

Capt Andrew Betton to HMS Ocean as CO from April 18.

Capt Paul Chivers to RNAS Yeovilton – C&SS as CO from May 10 and to be promoted Commodore.

Capt Nicholas Hine to HMS Westminster as CO from June 14.

Lt Col Robin Bucknall to RMR Bristol as CO from May 16.

Lt Col Alan Litster to HQ Squadron Fleet Protection Group Royal Marines as CO from May 9 and to be promoted Colonel.

Reunions

MARCH 2011

SM2 Sunshine Squadron Reunion: Takes place on March 5 at the Weston Mill Oakville Sports and Social Club, Fendale Road, Plymouth, Devon commencing at 1200. £2 on the door. Further details can be found on the website at <http://www.sm2sunshinesquadron.co.uk/> or by calling Billy Dobson on 01752 347009.

APRIL 2011

HMS Cossack Association: Reunion from April 8 to 11 at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea. You can get some information from the website at <http://www.hmscossack.org> or contact the Secretary Peter Harrison at cossack.assn@tiscali.co.uk or tel: 01252 613052. Those who wish to attend the service at St Ann's Church in the Naval Base should contact Chairman, Ken Satterthwaite at ken.satterthwaite@talktalk.net or tel: 01923 269714 for security pass into the base.

HMS Middleton (L74) Association: 26th reunion will be on April 15-16 at the RNA Club, Leamington Spa. All supporters welcome. Details from Mike Alston, 6 Belmont Park Road, Maidenhead, Berks, SL6 6HT or tel: 01628 629655.

MAY 2011

Omani Reunion: The 22nd reunion of military and civilian personnel who served in or with the Sultanate of Oman, is taking place in Hull, East Yorkshire in May. For more details contact Jim Dyon at jimandjan@jimandjan.karoo.co.uk or tel: 01482 846599.

HMS Aisne, last commission 1965-68: The last reunion was a great success and we are repeating it this year, this time in Southsea from May 6 to 8. All ranks, rates and partners welcome. For full details contact David 'Del' Shannon at dshannon1@live.co.uk or tel: 01243 822225.

HMS Loch Fada Reunion: The 13th reunion and AGM will be held at the Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool from April 15 to 18. All interested latecomers should contact F390 Sec, Frenchy at frenchy.delahaye@ntlworld.com or tel: 01252 310767 or write to 91 Ayling Lane, Aldershot, Hampshire, GU11 3ND.

Rosyth & West Fife Branch, RNA: The branch celebrates its Diamond Jubilee over the weekend of May 6 to 8. For more details contact the Hon Secretary, D Scarlett at deraek@aol.com or tel: 01259 730487. Email preferred.

North Russia Club: Reunion will take place at the Westhill Hotel, St Helier, Jersey. JE2 3HB from 7 to 14 May. Book direct or contact Harry Allen on 01843 832943 or Austin Byrne at austinbyrne@talktalk.net or tel: 01274 881821.

HMS Impregnable/Drake Association: Reunion will be held in Plymouth from May 13 to 15. New members are always welcome from both ships, any year. Further information can be obtained from the secretary at hawkins75@blueyonder.co.uk or tel: 0121 532 6141.

TS Bulldog/Fervent Association (Ramsgate Sea Cadets old boys and girls): Will be having a reunion at the unit on May 14 during the day, followed by a social evening at the Ramsgate RNA Club. All ex cadets, instructors, civil committee welcome. For more information contact Mick Todd at m.s.todd@yahoo.co.uk or tel: 07826 339151 or write to 18 Boundary Road, Ramsgate, Kent CT11 7NG.

HMS Antelope: The 2011 reunion will be held at Eton College on May 21. For further details please contact Bob Hutton at bobahutton@hotmail.com or tel: JC Frankland on 029 2089 4818.

HMS Hood Association: AGM at 1600, and 36th Anniversary Reunion Dinner at 1900 on May 23 at the Royal Maritime Club, Queen Street, Portsmouth. This being the 70th anniversary of the Battle of the Denmark Strait in which HMS Hood was sunk, there will be an assembly and Memorial Service at the Royal Naval Memorial on Southsea Common, conducted by the Venerable John Green CB starting at 1100. Following the service there will be a reception and buffet lunch at the Queens Hotel. Service of Commemoration at St John Baptist Church, Boldre, near Lymington at 1100 on May 15. Further details from Vice-Chairman, Keith Evans on 01428 642122.

JUNE 2011

HMS Euryalus Association: AGM and reunion dinner on June 4 at the Rutland Square Hotel, Nottingham. Tel: 0115 941 1114 and quote: 64968 or ring Barbara Cotton on 01380 483434.

HMS Opportune Association: Reunion to be held at the Elgin Hotel, Blackpool from June 6 to 10. All former shipmates and friends are welcome. For further details contact Anthony Joyner at anthonyjoyner@talktalk.net or tel: 01442 245281.

OCAAA Sultan Fair Dinner Dance: The OCAAA are holding a Dinner Dance at The Hilton Hotel, Portsmouth on June 18 to coincide with the HMS Sultan Summer Fair. The format will be a hot fork buffet, dessert, and coffee followed by a disco playing an appropriate range of music. Please arrive at 7pm for 7-30pm start. We will have access to our own bar at 25 per cent discounted prices. For those wishing an overnight stay the cost is £94 per double B&B. A two night stay is £120 B&B. The cost for the Dinner Dance is £25 per person. Please forward cheques made payable to OCAAA to: Don Smith at donald.smith60@ntlworld.com or tel/fax: 01329 318440 or write to 24 Wakefield Avenue, Fareham, Hants PO16 7RP.

HMS Belfast: 1961-62 Commission 50th Anniversary Reunion. June 18-19 centered on board HMS Belfast and in the Union Jack Club (Waterloo). Please register interest with

David Gibbon at gibbon35@gmail.com or write to 52 Beaufort Road, Wroughton, Wilts SN4 9HE or tel: 01793 813484.

HMS Wildfire: The Royal Naval Reserve unit based at Brackenhill House adjacent to Northwood Headquarters is on the move after almost 23 years in residence. Based inside the wire until 1988, and known as HMS Northwood until renamed in May 2000, HMS Wildfire will return to a new purpose-built within the Northwood Headquarters complex in June this year, emphasising further the integration of Regular and Reserve naval personnel. Former reservists and permanent staff, both service and civilian, who served at HMS Wildfire and HMS Northwood are invited to attend and can register their interest by calling 01923 957770 or by email to wildfire-ao@mod.uk.

JULY 2011

NP 1042/OP Lecturer-Cambodia Reunion: Did you serve in Cambodia 1991-92 as part of NP 1042/OP Lecturer? Any serving or former RM/RN or attached civilian personnel who served in Cambodia 1991-92 as part of the UNAMIC/UNTAC Mission interested in meeting up for beer and dits? This will take place at Commando Forces Sergeants Mess, RM Barracks, Stone House, Plymouth on July 22 at 1900. Cost is estimated to be no more than £10. All those interested please email Tony Jacka at Anthony.jacka219@mod.uk or tel: 07919 292819 for an application form.

AUGUST 2011

HMS Ganges Exmouth 42 & 45 Mess – April 1966: Is there anyone who was in Class 238, 239 (Comms) or 332 (Elec) who may wish to go to a reunion or at the very least, get in touch with old shipmates. I hope to organise for late summer/early autumn, but I need to know numbers prior to picking a location. Please get in touch with Keith Morison at keithmorison@msn.com or tel: 07941 555951.

SEPTEMBER 2011

LST & Landing Craft Association: Annual reunion at Mill Pythe Holiday Village, Hayling Island from September 12 to 16. DB&B £130 per person. All welcome. Contact Mike Cresswell, Park View Farm, Broad Lane, Cawood, Selby, YO8 3UE or tel: 07717 038300.

BRNC Dartmouth Entry September 1966: A reunion dinner to mark the 45th anniversary of arriving at BRNC will be held at the Royal Naval Club and Royal Albert Yacht Club, Portsmouth on Friday September 16 2011. For more information e-mail musters358@btinternet.com or tel: 01264 810459.

RN Boom Defence Ratings: Reunion at Scarborough from September 23 to 25. For more details contact Alf Mumberson at barcarole1958@blueyonder.co.uk or tel: 01302 811898 or Lance at lthps@ao.com tel: 01723 369798.

HMS Brazen Association Reunion: The first reunion of the HMS Brazen Association will be held on September 24 at the Three Crowns Pub, Barbican, Plymouth. Full details of the reunion and membership of the association can be found on our website at <http://hms-brazen.org.uk> or tel: 01329 332756.

HMS Exmouth 1968-71: The next reunion will be held at the Comfort Hotel, Great Yarmouth from September 30 to October 1. Anyone wishing to attend or requiring further information should contact Mickey Dunne at michael.dunne7@ntlworld.com or tel: 01325 258193.

HMS Victorious Association: A reunion is planned for September 30 to October 3 at the Britannia Hotel, Coventry. A warm welcome is extended to all ex shipmates. For details contact Jim Collinson at jim.col@talktalk.net or tel: 01302 770821. We would also like to extend a welcome to all who would like to join our association no matter what commission or rank.

OCTOBER 2011

HMS Arethusa Association: 23rd Reunion October 7 to 10 in Bournemouth. All former serving members, wives/partners and guests welcome. Contact Tom Sawyer at rolandsawyer@sky.com or write to 6 Sycamore Close, Slingsby, York, YO62 4BG.

Castle-Class Corvette /Frigate Association: Annual Reunion October 7 to 10 at the Red Lea Hotel, Scarborough. Did you or a relative serve on one of these 39 WW2 escort ships? All ex shipmates and friends are welcome aboard this event. To join the association and/or obtain further details please contact the Secretary Mike Biffen at wrekin160830@blueyonder.co.uk or tel: 0121 429 3895.

Bay-Class Reunion: Reunion at Torquay from October 14 to 16. All Bay-class frigate men are welcome. Contact Doug Turk at doug.turk@ntlworld.com or tel: 01252 378629.

Sports lottery

January 22: £5,000 – Lt S J Holbrook; £1,500 – Lt Cdr N R Holland; £500 – AB1 R I Hamilton.

January 29: £5,000 – AB1 D B Reid; £1,500 – AB1 C W Morgan; £500 – Lt F T Suter.

February 5: £5,000 – PO A J Williams; £1,500 – WO1 B Long; £500 – Maj J A Dennis.

February 12: £5,000 – PO J M Benn; £1,500 – AB1 K S Lovell; £500 – AB1 W R Davies.

Competition

In2Deep competition that appeared in our January 2011 issue. Four copies to be given away.

Winning answer: Buster Crabbs.

Winners: Mr R W Smith, Westone, Northampton; Mr P D Haynes, Altrincham, Cheshire; John Makinson, Overton, Morecambe; David Thompson, Worle, Weston-super-Mare

Contact sheet

Ministry of Defence: 0870 607 4455, www.mod.uk

Royal Navy recruitment: 0845 607 5555, www.royalnavy.mod.uk

Veterans Agency: 0800 169 2277, www.veterans-uk.info

RN and RM Service records: 01283 227912, navysearhpgc@tnt.co.uk

Royal Naval Association: 023 9272 3823, www.royal-naval-association.co.uk

Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity: 023 9254 8076, www.rnrmc.org.uk

RNBT: 023 9269 0112 (general), 023 9266 0296 (grants), www.rnbt.org.uk

British Legion: 08457 725725, www.britishlegion.org.uk

Naval Families Federation: 023 9265 4374, www.nff.org.uk

Swap drafts

Logs (Writer) Tyrell. Would like to swap jobs from HMS Flying Fox, Bristol city centre, to anywhere in Plymouth. The job consists of basic pay writer issues to the RN, RM, RNR and RMR. It attracts FIA and is accommodated in Bristol city centre. Seeking any writer billets in the Plymouth area. Contact: 0117 947 1100 or email NRCWWE-JSU-CPRCLERK@mod.uk.

Seafarers UK: 020 7932 0000, www.seafarers-uk.org

SSAFA Forces Help: 0845 1300 975, www.ssafo.org.uk

RN Community: www.rncom.mod.uk

Medals enquiries: 0800 085 3600

Royal Naval Museum: 023 9272 7562, www.royalnavalmuseum.org

Fleet Air Arm Museum: 01935 840565, www.fleetairarm.com

Royal Marines Museum: 023 9281 9385, www.royalmarinesmuseum.co.uk

RN Submarine Museum: 023 9252 9217, www.rnsubmus.co.uk

National Maritime Museum: 020 8312 6565, www.nmm.ac.uk

Imperial War Museum: 020 7416 5320, www.iwm.org.uk

Trophy lives



IN March 1942, Convoy MW 10 sailed from Alexandria to Malta carrying much-needed supplies of ammunition and fuel for the island; it was escorted by Rear Admiral Vian in HMS Cleopatra, with four other light cruisers and 17 destroyers.

Knowing the convoy to be at sea, an Italian force of the battleship Littorio, three cruisers, eight destroyers and a submarine under the command of Admiral Angelo Iachino sailed from Taranto and Messina; the merchant ships were also subjected to air attack while on passage.

On the afternoon of March 22, to the north of the Gulf of Sirte, the enemy heavy cruisers were sighted; Admiral Vian took his cruisers and fleet destroyers to attack the enemy, leaving the convoy under air attack and defended by an anti-aircraft cruiser and the smaller destroyers.

As the British ships were to windward of the Italians they were able to use smoke screens to cover their own movements and those of the merchantmen they were protecting.

The Italians were driven off, only to return later with the Littorio and a further engagement of 2½ hours duration ensued.

The British attacked with torpedoes, gunfire and further smokescreen protection; three of Vian's destroyers were damaged but the Italians were driven off as dusk fell as, without radar, they were unable to effectively fight by night.

Sadly these two actions delayed the passage of the convoy and on the following day half the merchant ships were lost to enemy air attack.

This outstanding victory against superior odds led to the creation of **Trophy 7,894**, an illuminated script, which reads:

Battle of Sirte 23 March 1942

To Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham KCB DSO, Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean Fleet.

I shall be glad if you will convey to Admiral Vian, and all who sailed with him, the admiration which I feel at this resolute and brilliant action by which the Malta convoy was saved.

That one of the most powerful modern battleships afloat, attended by two heavy and four light cruisers and a flotilla of destroyers should have been routed and put to flight with severe torpedo and gunfire injury, in broad daylight, by a force of five British light cruisers and destroyers, constitutes a naval episode of the highest distinction and entitles all ranks and ratings concerned and above all their commander to the compliments of the British nation.

The citation is signed by Winston Churchill, and lists the ships which took part in the action and their Commanding Officers – Cleopatra, Euryalus, Dido, Carlisle, Penelope, the 14th Destroyer Flotilla and the 22nd Destroyer Flotilla.

NOTICEBOARD



1971 1981 1991 2001 THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

We flick back through the pages of Navy News to see which stories were drawing attention in past decades...



● The Aurora rodeo of March 1971

March 1971

SAILORS from HMS Aurora and the mine-hunters of the Hong Kong-based Dragon squadron turned cowboy for the day when they volunteered to recapture a herd of wild cattle on the Mers Bay island of Wong Wan Chau.

More than 100 responded to the call for help and found themselves hacking through dense scrubland to round up the herd, estimated by villagers to number 300. Three hours of skirmishing ended without injury and with 60 cattle in the pen, including the young calf, pictured.

March 1981

OFFERED a choice of desks for the Oval Office the newly-elected US President, Ronald Reagan, chose the British-made HMS Resolute desk, which had been sent to Washington as a gift from Queen Victoria in 1880.

The desk, used by nearly all American presidents from Rutherford Hayes to Barack Obama, was made from the timbers of the Resolute, bought by the Admiralty in 1850 for Arctic exploration.

In 1852 she was sent to the Arctic in a squadron with four other ships led by Edward Belcher in search of Sir John Franklin's lost expedition.

It was an unsuccessful mission, Resolute was abandoned in pack ice and later recovered, intact, by an American whaler. She was brought back to Chatham, where she remained until she was broken up in 1879.

March 1991

HMS EXETER was arriving in the Gulf to relieve sister ship HMS Cardiff as the Gulf War continued.

'Iraqi Navy wiped out' was the front-page headline in Navy News, with the report that more than 40 Iraqi vessels had been destroyed by the Allies, with a hefty share falling to RN helicopter pilots.

Naval supremacy had been claimed within a fortnight of the start of the campaign at sea, with the combination of Lynx helicopters and Sea Skua missiles proving particularly devastating against Iraqi surface units.

March 2001

TWO renowned wartime submariners were present to see the keel of Astute, the Navy's newest submarine, laid in Barrow-in-Furness.

Vice Admiral Sir Arthur Hezlet was the former commander of HMS Trenchant, which sank the Japanese cruiser Ashigara with a precise salvo of torpedoes in the Far East in 1945.

In the same year, Lt Cdr Ian Fraser took his midget submarine into the heart of Japanese-occupied Singapore and with great difficulty laid charges underneath the Japanese cruiser Takao. His diver, James Magennis, received the VC for his part in the action.

Vice Admiral Hezlet died in 2007, aged 93. Lt Cdr Fraser died in 2008, aged 87.

The keel-laying ceremony for Astute took place close to the spot where the Navy's first submarine, Holland 1, had been built 100 years before.

Entries for the Deaths' column and Swap Drafts in April's Noticeboard must be received by March 11

Talking Navy News

Navy News is available free of charge as a digital file on memory stick or email from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 023 9269 0851 and leave a message with a contact number, or email patn-rec@hotmail.com, or visit the website www.patn.org.uk. A speaker that will take a USB plug is required but this can be obtained from the Talking News, or the file can be played back through a computer.

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Reporting from the Fleet

Ask Jack

HMS Glowworm: I am looking for members of the ship's company of HMS Glowworm, a destroyer, sunk after the ramming of the German vessel Admiral Hipper (1940 Narvik campaign). The sole survivor Bert Lowman lives in Havant. One other possibility is named Blair, last seen by myself at HMS Condor, Arbroath in 1960. Thought to have gone to Australia. The only other chap was Bert Harris, late of Portland, though his widow is still at same address. Recently made contact with a relative of another chap, lost, by name of Curry. My purpose is to arrange a memorial plaque to the skipper and crew where the Victoria Cross was awarded, but seemingly forgotten in Cdr Roope's hometown. Another sticking point has been the finance for the project,

but this cannot be a problem if a senior RN officer were to put his weight behind the scheme. I welcome any communication. Contact Bert Fryer at bertfryer@btinternet.com or tel: 01363 772822.

HMS Collingwood: I am desperately trying to contact classmates with whom I served in HMS Collingwood on the WEMNO course which completed in 1974. The names I remember are: Brum/Pincher Martin, Jack Hawkins, George Dudley, Chris Gooding, Pommy Pomfret and Micky Russell. They all attended my wedding in Bradford, April 1973 and I am trying to organise a big party for my Ruby Wedding in two years time. Contact Andy Shutt, 51 Station Road, Snainton, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO13 9AP.

MISCELLANEOUS

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Regatta entries welcomed

ENTRIES are now being accepted for this year's Royalist Regatta, a two-day team-building event in late spring.

The regatta offers the chance to forge a strong team in a 'highly-competitive environment' while raising funds for the Sea Cadets.

There are a number of packages available, from full yacht sponsorship, including practice, races, champagne reception, black-tie dinner and other meals, down to a dinner ticket only, covering the champagne reception and dinner.

Experienced sailors and novices are both welcome, though each yacht crew must include at least two qualified/experienced members.

Organisers can help teams find experienced crew, and for those who would like to support the event but cannot rustle up a crew, there are opportunities to sponsor a Sea Cadet boat.

Registration for the regatta takes place on Tuesday May 17 on board TS Royalist, the Sea Cadets' square-rigged training ship which gives the event its name and which acts as hospitality boat for the two days.

That is followed by the handover of the Sunsail F40 yachts and optional practice sessions and races from midday.

The champagne reception and dinner, on board HMS Warrior, rounds off the first day.

Wednesday May 18 starts with a hearty breakfast and briefing from race officials, then a minimum of four races will be held in the Solent, during which a packed lunch and refreshments will be supplied for each yacht.

Prize-giving and an afternoon reception and buffet round off the event.

To register your interest contact the Events Officer at events@ms-sc.org or call: 0207 654 7016.

Cadets are on Facebook

SEA Cadets has embraced the information superhighway and can now be found at facebook.com/seacadetsuk and @seacadetsuk

"Since setting up the page late last year, the fan base has grown to just under 2,000 but we have a way to go yet, with 14,000 cadets in the Corps," said Samantha Shaw, Head of Communications and Media at MSSC, the parent body of the Sea Cadets.

"We've had a great response from cadets who like the page, and it means we can talk more directly with them and find out what interests them, what they are up to and generally just have a conversation with them."

"It also means we can flash important messages out quickly, and take a more light-hearted approach – for example, Sea Cadets' involvement with Red Nose Day and the launch of our new offshore poster brochure."

"We have also launched a page, facebook.com/seacadetsalumni, for all those ex-cadets to stay in touch."

"We would love to hear from you!"



● **MORE** than 90 cadets and staff left the Weston-super-Mare headquarters of TS Weston at 5.30am on a freezing cold day to help welcome home their affiliated ship. Type 23 frigate HMS Somerset had been deployed to the Gulf for six months, and though the temperature may have been well down the welcome was warm – not only did TS Weston provide a band and guard of honour, but there was also a Royal Marines band and an escort up-river by patrol boat HMS Raider. The cadets played once to entertain families and friends on the jetty, and once again when the ship went alongside and her sailors disembarked. Later in the morning the group from Weston-super-Mare was invited on board and given a tour of the ship, which also allowed them to thaw out...

Red noses and dark blue suits

CITY of London Sea Cadets wore their red noses with pride for a Red Nose Day 2011 photo shoot at their headquarters on board HMS Belfast.

The Sea Cadets Corps is teaming up with Comic Relief for this year's Red Nose Day, Friday March 18.

By raising cash this Red Nose Day cadets can help the charity in its avowed aim to change lives forever.

This is because Comic Relief spends all the money raised by the public to give extremely vulnerable and disadvantaged people in the UK and Africa a helping hand to turn their lives around.

The Red Nose Day team is working with youth groups up and down the country, and is challenging every Sea Cadet unit to get involved.

To help you come up with some fun-filled fundraising ideas there is a fundraising activity kit designed specifically for young people, packed full of ideas to help you raise loads of cash.

You can get your hands on one at www.rednoseday.com/youthgroups

To find out more about Sea Cadets teaming up with Comic Relief visit www.sea-cadets.org/comicrelief.aspx

Units have been getting involved in Comic Relief, and other major fundraising initiatives such as Children in Need, for years, but this is the first time a formal link has been created.



St Helens claims trophy

THE Royal Marine Cadets Detachment at St Helens unit has been awarded the SRMO's Trophy in recognition of their improvement over the past year.

The trophy, competed for by all detachments in the country, was presented to the unit by Lt Col John Davies RM, the Area Officer for the North West (see right).

On presenting the award, Lt Col Davies congratulated the young men and women in the detachment, as well as the volunteers.

"The Royal Marine Cadet Detachment here at St Helens is a credit to themselves and the wider Sea Cadet Corps," he said.

"There was considerable competition for this trophy from across the country, and I am delighted that it has been won by a detachment from the North West for a second year running."

"My congratulations to the cadets involved, and to all the staff who put in so much effort that has led to this success."

"They should be very proud."



Quiz night attracts a big crowd

CATERHAM unit held its first fun quiz night – and was almost the victim of its own success.

The Main Deck at TS Zephyr was bursting at the seams with more than 60 people in 16 teams testing their brown power.

Unit chairman Tony Skilbeck acted as quizmaster, and the overall winners were the Quizzicals – Danny and Daddy Rastelli's team – which scored 105 out of 120.

All the participants enjoyed a baked potato supper with ice cream to follow.

The unit owes a big debt of thanks to Andrea, Brenda and Jo for masterminding and preparing the food, and also to cadets Liam Harrower, Harry Castle, Alfie and Sam Piper who, as well as taking part in the quiz, helped with setting it out and packing everything away afterwards.

The evening raised around £450 for unit funds, with almost £100 from the raffle.

Meanwhile, plans to launch a Royal Marine Cadet detachment at Caterham have been delayed because of a number of staff changes at the unit – though work on the new section is continuing.

CI Ash Frost has been working hard on his climbing skills in order to qualify as a climbing instructor later this year, and the unit is now almost ready to start recruiting.



● Warsash unit's Marine Engineering 3rd Class course under way at the Warsash Maritime Academy engineering workshop

Warsash runs first engineering course

WARSASH unit has run its first Marine Engineering 3rd Class course, thanks to the facilities available just outside the door of their headquarters.

Seven cadets attended the course from their HQ in the Warsash Maritime Academy (WMA), at the mouth of the Hamble River near Fareham, in Hampshire.

The cadets spent the weekend learning health and safety matters, basic engine construction, mechanical systems and electrical theory, based at the impressive WMA engineering workshop.

Completing the course means the cadets have taken their first step to the BTEC First Diploma in Engineering (Maintenance) that can be completed within the Sea Cadets Corps.

The seven cadets on the course passed written and oral assessments conducted by an independent examiner from another Sea Cadet unit.

They are now waiting to be presented with their certificates and specialisation badges.

The unit is now stepping up its fundraising efforts by helping in the community.

Most recently, cadets have been assisting shoppers with bag-packing in the Iceland supermarket in Fareham.

The aim is to raise funds for unit growth, including the acquisition of a new base of operations.

The cadets came out in force from the unit at Warsash over three weekends in December, and managed to raise £1,324 – but they know there is still a long way to go.

More fundraising events have been planned by cadets for 2011, and they hope to raise a substantial sum to ensure the expansion of their facilities so that they can continue to offer great facilities to the young people of Fareham and the surrounding areas.



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Hartlepool duo are honoured

TWO members of Hartlepool unit have been honoured by the Lord Lieutenant of County Durham, Sir Paul Nicholson.

Unit chairman Eric Priest (pictured below), who leads a team responsible for securing funds to support the unit, was recognised for his outstanding commitment and dedication in turning the unit's fortunes around.

POC Phillip Riley is the top cadet in the unit and will be the Lord Lieutenant's Cadet for 2012, one of the highest honours a cadet can gain during their career.

He was chosen from cadets throughout the county and will escort the Lord Lieutenant on his ceremonial duties.

POC Riley will be the third cadet in a row to be chosen from Hartlepool for such a duty.

Unit CO S/Lt (SCC) Stephen Harvey RNR said: "Obviously the unit is extremely proud to have such outstanding people involved as POC Riley and Mr Priest – both are an asset to the unit."



Kettering unit adopts air squadron's name

KETTERING unit got off to a flying start in 2011 by assuming a new name.

And as the Harrier has bowed out of service, and the last Fleet Air Squadron which flew it has been decommissioned, it leaves the youngsters as the only current holders of the name 800 Naval Air Squadron.

Staff at the unit had sought to encourage closer links between the unit, formerly known as TS Pythley, and the Joint Force Harrier aviators based at RAF Cottesmore.

The cadets visited Cottesmore last autumn, enjoying a tour of the facilities and a close-up look at the fabled jump jet.

Then the Strategic Defence and Security Review pulled the plug on the Harrier force, and instead of enjoying a link, the unit is now the standard-bearer for the defunct squadron.

Cdr David Lindsay, Commanding Officer of 800 Naval Air Squadron, said: "As the squadron is being disbanded as result of the recent Strategic Defence and Security Review, we wanted to ensure that the name would live on."

"We felt that Sea Cadets share our ethos and values, so there is no better way to secure our future than by giving the next generation a legacy they can be inspired by."

The unit's official renaming ceremony took place at the end of January, during which Cdr

Lindsay formally handed over the squadron's name and presented the cadets with cap tallies.

The squadron also handed over their Battle Honours board to the unit for safekeeping.

A number of personnel, including pilots, from 800 NAS attended the evening, and enjoyed an event which included a performance by the unit band of the Fleet Air Arm march, *Flying Stations*, and a recitation of the history of the squadron by cadets and juniors.

A cake was cut by Air Engineer Officer Lt Cdr Mark Kingdom and Cdt Taylor, the youngest in the unit (pictured right), and the unit's guests were given tours of the unit.

Lt (SCC) Marc Pether RMR, the Commanding Officer of the Kettering unit, said: "The Harrier jet is the last of the fixed-wing aircraft within the RN Fleet Air Arm, and we are hoping that our affiliation with this illustrious squadron will help raise the profile of our unit to people in Kettering."

"We are really grateful to 800 Squadron for this opportunity and are looking forward to a new chapter in Kettering Sea Cadets unit's history."

And with perfect timing, the cadets were able to show off their new cap tallies at the squadron's official decommissioning parade, which was staged at RAF Wittering the following morning.



Wirral win three out of four

CADETS from across the North West Area converged on Leasowe Recreation Centre, Wirral, for the finals of the area five-a-side competition.

Youngsters from Liverpool, Manchester, Lancashire, Wirral, Stafford, North Wales and Cumbria battled it out in a series of matches in four classes – junior boys, junior girls, senior boys and senior girls.

And home advantage seemed to pay off, as three Wirral teams took the honours, in both the junior competitions and the senior girls.

The senior boys title was taken back across the Mersey by the Liverpool cadets.

Trophies and medals were presented by the Senior Staff Officer for the North West, Cdr (SCC) Janet Evans RNR, who said: "Our young people can have a great time whilst getting involved in sport and making friends from all over the North West Area."

"It is a testament to youth at its best."

In the swim

FINCHLEY unit has been celebrating success at their local swimming gala.

TS Tartar took the honours in the boys, girls and juniors competitions – but at least one of those victories was pretty much on the cards.

Because the boys of Finchley have won their district swimming gala for the past 59 years in a row, in fact, every year since it started.

It will be 59 and out, though, as a district rearrangement means they will not be able to make it to 60.

Waitrose backs Buxton

BUXTON unit was delighted to receive a donation from the Waitrose 'Community Matters' Fund early this year.

A cheque for £321 was presented to PO Becky Luckman and four cadets from the unit by Dan Hopkinson of Waitrose.

The contribution was particularly welcomed as the unit is still working hard to raise funds for a new extension on their headquarters at the Cadet Centre site.

The work would also include internal alterations.

The existing building, at Silverlands, has recently been upgraded with new doors and windows installed, as well as improved toilet facilities.

However, in winter, space is very restricted for indoor activities, and the unit has around 42 cadets aged between ten and 18 to accommodate.

Staff and management at TS Bulwark would like to be able to open up the Sea Cadet experience to more youngsters.

The proposed extension would meet the demands of adequate space in a more modern environment.

The unit is lucky in that it has received support from some local businesses, but it still needs to find around £15,000 before work can start.

The hope is that more local people can be persuaded to donate to such a project right on their doorstep.

Meanwhile the cadets are busy preparing for their annual inspection by the Royal Navy, and are learning new skills for the sailing season.

Six of their number have recently passed a course in navigation.

Our next fundraising event is a family quiz night on Friday March 11 at Buxton Football Club, just across the road from the unit's HQ, starting at 7.30pm.

The maximum size of a team is five people.

Tickets, costing £5 for adults and £2.50 for under 18s, including a buffet, are available from 01298 243773.

Since its launch in 2008, Waitrose's Community Matters initiative has donated more than £3 million to a wide range of charities and community groups.

The scheme allocates each supermarket £1,000 to share out between three local good causes each month.

Customers 'vote' for their preferred cause using a green token each time they shop, and the money each cause is given is directly proportional to the tokens they receive.

TS Jersey gun pull raises thousands

THE balmy days of early September seemed a long time ago when the cold weather set in, but the efforts expended by cadets in Jersey as the summer faded yielded a tidy sum of money for a local charity which was handed over in the depth of winter.

Every year, Sea and Marine Cadets and staff from TS Jersey pull a gun and carriage around the Channel Island, raising money for a local charity.

The distance involved is around 37 miles, and the 2010 version – the 21st gun pull – involved groups working in shifts to cover the route, the 'off' crews being transported by bus to and from handover points.

They were seen on their way from St Saviour's Parish Hall by the Lieutenant Governor, Lt Gen Andrew Ridgway, the Connétable of St Saviour, Peter Hanning, and Robin Rumboll, the chairman of Help a Jersey Child, which was the beneficiary of the event.

For the first part of their route they were escorted by the Honorary Police.

Mr Rumboll visited the unit's headquarters to receive a cheque for £2,281.95, which will go direct to deserving island children via Help a Jersey Child, set up five years ago by local radio station Channel 103.

The unit has also held its annual awards evening, at which the two major prizes were awarded.



● Members of TS Jersey present the cheque to Robin Rumboll, chairman of Jersey Help a Child

POC Jenny Taylor was named as Sea Cadet of the Year, while Sgt Craig Norris took the honours as Marine Cadet of the Year.

Jenny joined TS Jersey as a 14-year-old, quickly working her way up through the ranks and breezing through her Petty Officer Cadet exams last November.

She has made full use of the opportunities available, including attendance at French Camp and a chance to sail between the Channel Islands and France.

She is particularly proficient

at seamanship, having gained what are believed to have been the highest marks ever in the Southern Area for her 2nd Class Seamanship.

Craig joined the unit five years ago as a Sea Cadet, transferring to the Royal Marine Cadet Detachment within three months.

Craig too has excelled in formal tests – last March he gained the joint highest score in the country for his National Sergeant's Board exams, winning the prestigious Halliday Trophy for his efforts.



● OC Roisin McElroy lays a wreath at the HMS Brazen memorial in Newhaven

Newhaven honours victims of shipwreck

THE annual Sea Cadet Sunday and HMS Brazen memorial service took place at St Michael's Church, Newhaven, at the end of January.

Officers and cadets from the Newhaven and Seaford unit, along with their Lewes Division TS Defiance, took part in proceedings.

Also there were the Mayor and Mayoress of Newhaven, Cllr Graham Amy and Mrs Marlene Amy.

Following a short service in the church, the party moved outside into the churchyard for prayers at the memorial to HMS Brazen.

OC Roisin McElroy laid a wreath on the memorial.

HMS Brazen was a captured

French privateer of 18 guns which had been deployed from Devon to patrol the coast of Sussex in January 1800 in response to reports of French privateers operating offshore.

Having taken one ship off the Isle of Wight, the sloop continued east but was wrecked early the following morning, January 26, under the cliffs of Newhaven.

All but one of her crew of around 105 died, and ten bodies – including that of her captain, James Hanson – were never recovered.

Bodies washed ashore were buried at St Michael's Church, and friends of her commanding officer paid for a memorial in his honour.



Volunteer cadet group flourishes

THE Sea Cadet Corps is not the only show in town.

A sister organisation, offering a broadly similar experience, exists in the form of the Volunteer Cadet Corps, which is officially recognised by the Ministry of Defence.

The VCC was formed in the first decade of the 20th century, to encourage the children of sailors to do something useful rather than cause trouble on the streets.

One version of the story traces the Corps' foundation back to the Royal Marines Barracks at Eastney in Portsmouth; a senior officer's window was broken by the son of a senior NCO who was kicking a football around, and the VCC was set up to provide an alternative and more edifying pastime for the bored lads.

The HMS Sultan VCC formed rather more recently; it has provided a safe environment for boys and girls aged between nine and 18 since 1979, and is based at Fort Grange Keep within the boundaries of the Gosport establishment.

It is one of only a handful of VCC units still operating, alongside another RN unit at HMS Collingwood in Fareham and Royal Marine VCC units at Portsmouth, Plymouth and Poole.

In addition to Royal Navy-based activities, the organisation also teaches youngsters to become 'good and meaningful citizens'.

Sultan VCC unit currently has 80 cadets on its books, with another 15 due to join this month, while 21 adult staff man the unit and teach skills to the youngsters.

Among the unit's activities are twice-weekly sports and training nights, field gun displays staged throughout the country, attendance at the Brickwoods field gun competition and the Sultan Show, Remembrance Day parades and Easter and summer activity camps at various locations.

There is also the opportunity to try their hand at activities such as gliding, sailing, boating, climbing, orienteering and survival weekends.

Sultan unit's first four registered cadets for the CVQO BTEC in Public Services all passed with a rating of Distinction*, equivalent to four grade As at GCSE.

And an ex-PO cadet, Jordan Wilshire, has been selected for the GB ladies ice hockey team, and is in the squad for the 2014 Winter Olympics, which will be hosted by the city of Sochi, in Russia.

Two of the unit's cadets, Joshua and Zachary Bentley-Allen, were introduced to the Queen when she visited HMS Ark Royal last November – and the monarch posed with them for a photo, definitely one for the family album.

Northampton keep the winning habit

ALL things considered, 2010 was a pretty good year for Northampton and Wellingborough unit – but don't imagine for a moment that they are going to take their foot off the gas.

The year had ended on a high when TS Laforey was declared the winner of the Canada Trophy, the prize for the top Sea Cadet unit in the country, and took a further three prizes – the paddle Trophy for the best canoeing unit, the Falcon Trophy for best community participation and the Cleverly Trophy for the best junior section in the UK.

Commanding Officer Lt (SCC) Chris Read RNR said: "These awards are an outstanding achievement for an inland unit, in competing at the highest levels with units often based in coastal locations, and speak volumes for what our young people achieve locally on the River Nene."

The final competition of 2010 saw the Laforey teams travel to Leicester unit for the Northamptonshire and Leicestershire drill competition – and it is perhaps no surprise that the piping teams and an armed drill squad took the honours and moved on to the Eastern Area competition.

2011 began with messages of thanks from the front line, all a result of the 51 Christmas boxes which had been put together by the cadets as part of Operation Shoebox.

Then the training ship – with the TS Diamond satellite division

Double success for Megan

PROBATIONARY PO Megan Duxbury, of Accrington unit, has been awarded the Cornwell Medal for achieving the highest score on her cadet examinations last year.

Megan, who was a Petty Officer Cadet at the time, also took the Pollock Memorial Prize the year before for attaining the highest scores in her exams.

It is believed to be the first time anyone has won the two awards consecutively.

Megan has now become a volunteer at the unit, hence the change from POC to PPO.

She was presented with the award, which has been given to high-achieving cadets since 1918, by the Senior Staff Officer for Sea Cadets in the North West, Cdr (SCC) Janet Evans RNR.

Megan, who also picked up two unit awards for good measure, has now set herself another challenge – she aims to train as a doctor.

of Rushden in harness – got back into the winning habit, this time taking on and beating the best of Eastern Area in the drill competition, the unit's sixth area win in a row.

As well as winning the armed guard event, the unit also won Best Guard Commander and POC Lara Jolley was awarded the trophy for outstanding ceremonial leadership.

Meanwhile, 15-year-old LC Joe Barley took the top spot in the piping competition, where he had to demonstrate the use of the traditional boatswain's (or bosun's) call.

The team will now go on to

represent the Eastern Area at the National Finals, which are to be held at HMS Raleigh near Plymouth in May.

Another highlight of January was the formal recognition of the unit's Royal Marines Cadet detachment, and Maj Stuart Taylor RM was expected at the unit to present the formal Certificate of Recognition to the cadets.

Lt (SCC) Read said: "The strength of the Sea Cadets is the variety of activities and opportunities we offer the young people."

"Having a strong Royal Marines Cadet detachment and Junior Sea Cadet section enables us to

proudly offer the largest range of adventurous youth training activities to young people of all abilities from ten to 18 years."

Northampton Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets meet on Tuesday and Friday evenings at their headquarters in Nunn Mills Road, Northampton.

The Rushden Diamond Division cadets – who are aiming to gain full independence as a unit in their own right in due course, and also work closely with Kettering unit to the north of the county of Northamptonshire – meet on the same nights as their parent unit at the Cadet Forces Building, Victoria Road in Rushden.

Lord West pays a call

FORMER First Sea Lord Lord West of Spithead paid a visit to Warsash unit to inspect the cadets and present some of them with awards including Duke of Edinburgh Awards, Royal Yachting Association certificates and Sea Cadet specialisations.

During the evening Lord West, who is also Chancellor of Southampton Solent University, was given a tour of the facilities at the unit's headquarters in the Warsash Maritime Academy.

Groups of cadets staged demonstrations to illustrate the type of skills they develop during their twice-weekly training evenings.

There were two key presentations.

The first was by the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award team, outlining their assessment in the New Forest.

The second was by OC Naomi Manger on her once-in-a-lifetime trip to Lesotho, South Africa, as featured in the January edition of *Navy News*.



● Barrow, Kendal and Workington cadets and staff in front of submarine Ambush at the Devonshire Dock Hall in Barrow

Three units involved with Ambush

CADETS from three units in the North West performed route-lining duties at the naming ceremony for the latest Royal Navy submarine.

The Barrow unit drum and bugle band led a parade of some 70 cadets through the BAE Submarine Solutions shipyard to the Devonshire Dock Hall, where the second of the Astute-class boats was waiting to emerge into the cold light of day.

And a bitterly cold day it was in Barrow-in-Furness, making it a tough programme for the band and marchers, which also featured cadets and staff from Cumbria District units Kendal and Workington.

The group also lined the guest routes inside the massive hall both before and after the naming ceremony, which – as reported in last month's edition of *Navy News* – could not include the new boat's roll-out as her

transporter was playing up.

Six cadets performed car door-opening duties for the VIPs, which included Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Trevor Soar and his wife Lady Soar, who is the sponsor of Ambush.

The submarine was rolled out earlier this year and lowered into the water, in preparation for an extensive programme of trials before she can join her home port of Faslane.

Getting to grips with weapons



STAFF from Tewkesbury unit were amongst those attending a recent South West Area weapons handling course for cadets and volunteers.

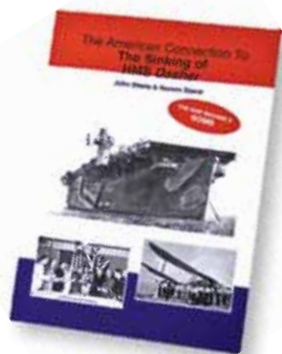
More than 60 cadets and staff signed up for the course, which was held at HMS Raleigh and led by Capt and Sgt Scholes of the Royal Marines Cadet Corps.

Amongst those at the Sea Cadet Training Centre in Torpoint, which is located within the Royal Navy's New Entry training establishment and shares some of its facilities, was Tewkesbury's chaplain, Canon Roger Gray, who has attended various courses to familiarise himself with the roles and activities of cadets and volunteers.

● (Left) PO (SCC) Marianne Cottee, of Tewkesbury unit, on the rifle range

● (Right) Weapons instructor PO (SCC) Stuart McGhee shows the finer points of an L98A1/2 (Cadet GP Rifle) to Canon Roger Gray, chaplain of Tewkesbury unit





An inevitable disaster

NEARLY 70 years since she blew up off Arran, the loss of wartime escort carrier HMS Dasher continues to generate interest – and headlines.

Two thirds of her ship's company died when Dasher was rocked by an internal explosion and quickly sank.

To tragedy was added cover-up – the Admiralty forbade mention of the disaster which historians have spent the past seven decades trying to understand.

Chief among them are John and Noreen Steele who live in Ardrossan – the Ayrshire town overlooking the spot where Dasher exploded and sank – and who have spent the past two decades investigating the carrier's sad fate. Their latest research forms the basis of *The American Connection to the Sinking of HMS Dasher* (Kestrel, £9.99 ISBN 978-0953263714).

In the past the Steeles have argued that the 'man who never was' was a Dasher crew member, one John Melville (although Whitehall belatedly acknowledged that Welsh vagrant Glyndwr Michael was the fictional Major Martin used to deceive the Germans over the invasion of Sicily).

As the title suggests, in their fourth book on the subject, the Steeles argue that the Americans had a hand in the disaster – namely that botched work in US shipyards doomed Dasher from the outset.

She began life as the merchantman Rio de Janeiro, but the need to protect convoys meant she was converted into a 'escort carrier' – half the size and one third of the number of aircraft of a full-size flat-top.

The conversion was hurried. When she arrived in the UK, Dasher underwent some equally hurried work in Greenock, then was pressed into service for the invasion of North Africa without the crew having sufficient time to work-up.

Dasher survived Operation Torch and a Russian convoy run (although the Arctic weather revealed the extent of the poor workmanship converting the vessel).

Barely had she been repaired than she was back at sea. Preparing to support the war against the U-boat in the Battle of the Atlantic, Dasher exploded off Arran on March 27 1943. Petrol vapour, probably ignited by a discarded cigarette, was thought to be the cause. Within eight minutes, the ship was gone.

Despite the title, the cover-up surrounding Dasher's fate demonstrated by the authors here is less American than Anglo-American.

London didn't wish to rock the boat with Washington – although it did; it advised the Americans that the design of their escort carriers was faulty (the Americans in turn blamed inexperienced RN officers for the tragedy).

Certainly the Admiralty does not come out well of this un edifying story:

■ A naval pilot who flew over the ship as she blew up was told categorically by a Whitehall staff officer that nothing had happened.

■ The Board of Inquiry failed to interview key witnesses – it deliberately sidelined Dasher's captain who had voiced his concerns about safety aboard.

■ Safety standards were 'low' – not just in Dasher, but across the RN's fleet of escort carriers – but sailors were not properly trained

Dasher's CO, Capt Boswell, is one man who comes out of the sorry story with honour.

He maintained to his death that there should be a full inquiry into the disaster. He has been dead for more than 35 years – and still the Dasher story rumbles on.

SO THE obvious question.

Why a review in a naval publication of a book about Germans in a land battle?

Well, aside from the fact that *The German Army at Ypres 1914* (Pen & Sword, £25 ISBN 978-1848841130) is a bloody good read, Jack Sheldon's book sheds fresh light on the small, yet important, part played by the Royal Navy in the opening clashes of the Great War.

In popular culture the WW1 is dominated by the 'futile' battles of Verdun, Somme and Passchendaele and the bitter poetry of the likes of Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon.

That's given us a rather jaundiced view of the 1914-1918 armageddon: it wasn't all trenches and 'over the top'.

The opening months of the Great War are as dynamic and dramatic as the blitzkrieg campaigns a generation later.

With the German march on Paris thwarted on the River Marne, the two sides sought to outflank each other in northwest France and Belgium – a series of battles known as 'the race to the sea'.

In the final days of October the Germans were on the verge of breaking through near the small Belgian town of Nieuwpoort near the mouth of the Yser.

And it was here, says the author – Britain's leading authority on the German Army in the Great War – that the Royal Navy "saved the day".

Enter Rear Admiral Horace Hood in the pre-dreadnought HMS Venerable and a motley assortment of monitors and destroyers (two of them French) to pummel the Hun sweeping along the coast (today we'd call it Naval Gunfire Support).

Hood's guns all but wiped out 4th Ersatz (Replacement) Division – German accounts talk of a "hurricane of fire" which

reduced a division to a battalion.

The fighting was not entirely one-sided, however. U-boats tried to strike at the bombarding forces – and were driven away by Hood's destroyer screen – while German coastal batteries hammered away at the warships. They scored hits on at least four vessels, wiping out the six-pounder gun crew on destroyer HMS Syren.

It was the Germans who suffered the most. One NCO complained that the naval bombardment forced his men "to lead the life of cave dwellers".

Above all the barrage from the sea bought the Allies time – time Belgian engineers used to open the sluice gates and flood the Flanders terrain, decisively stalling the enemy advance.

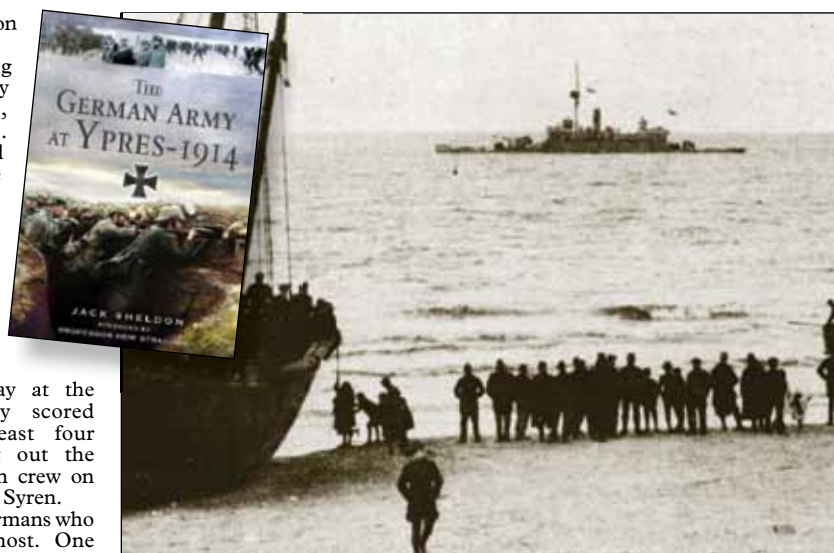
And when all the talk in the upper echelons of the Navy and Government recently has been about Anglo-French co-operation at sea, it's nothing new.

When Venerable pulled out of bombardment, Hood remained to direct the battle, shifting his flag to L'Intrépide – the first time a Royal Navy officer had commanded on a French vessel without it being taken first as a prize.

By the time Hood's guns fell silent, battle was raging 20 miles inland near the village of Langemark, just outside Ypres.

It's a battle which in the German psyche is on a par with the Charge of the Light Brigade.

It became known as the



● A Royal Navy monitor – possibly HMS Humber – off the Flanders coast in October 1914 during the Fleet's small but vital contribution to the 'race to the sea'

Kindermord – slaughter of the innocents – as hastily-trained volunteers, many of them students, were scythed down by British troops.

Under the Nazis the *Kindermord* was turned into an heroic epic, a German Thermopylae, young men willingly advancing towards death, singing the national anthem as they went.

Through harrowingly-vivid first-hand accounts, the author demolishes the heroic myth – although the troops really did enter battle singing *Deutschland über Alles* and other patriotic songs, among them *Heil Dir im Siegerkranz* (Hail to thee in Victor's Crown)... sung to the same tune as *God Save the King* which probably baffled the Brits they were attacking.

By the time the battle petered out in mid-November, Allies and Germans alike were exhausted and soldiers on both sides

were occupying hurriedly-dug trenches: the Western Front had solidified from the Channel coast to the Swiss border.

A concerted propaganda campaign in 1914 has left us with images of a beastly Hun raping and pillaging their way across north-west Europe (there were atrocities committed, but not of the boiling babies variety...).

But the experiences and emotions of many Fritzes aren't all that different from Tommies or *les poilus*. One soldier from Bavaria was haunted by the fighting at Ypres that first autumn of the war. He captured his feelings in poetry – in words not a million miles away from Owen, Brooke, Sassoon or Grenfell.

*They march past me in silence,
Each with a staring eye
A never-ending cortège
Of fallen, passing by.*

The good Pubs guide 1913-55

BETWEEN 1913 and 1955 half the officers who entered the Royal Navy never attended the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth.

Most of these were from the 'Special Entry' – conceived by Winston Churchill's Admiralty just before World War 1 to deal with an expected shortfall in lieutenants.

The 'Special Entry' took boys aged 18 when they left their civilian schools, usually public schools, which gave the new 'Churchill Scheme' its more usual name of 'Public School Entry' or 'Pubs' for short, writes Professor Eric Grove of the University of Salford.

The first term was given a full year's instruction in the cruiser Highflyer but the coming of war led to its replacement by 1-2 terms in the Royal Naval College, Keyham.

This was supplemented once more by a cruiser from mid-1918 and by the following year the entire course was held in various ships, settling down from 1924 as the battleship Thunderer.

She was a static hulk by this time and sea training was carried out in an attached sloop.

The battleship was replaced in 1926 by the monitor Erebus, which doubled as turret drill ship for Devonport gunnery school. She lasted until 1933 when the cruiser Frobisher – a name to be long associated with the 'Pubs' – was chosen for the entire training of 'Pubs' and to give sea time to the Dartmouth cadets (the 'Darts').

Rearmament meant an increase in the numbers of Special Entries from 1936 and it was decided in 1937 to re-use Erebus as a static training ship, this time at Portsmouth, for the first classroom based term.

The Grove Review

Frobisher was replaced by the heavily-converted training cruiser Vindictive but in 1939 briefly took over the monitor's static role for a term until the May 1939

'Frobishers' went to Dartmouth for a two-term course. Training remained ashore, moving to Eaton Hall after the bombing of Dartmouth in 1942.

In 1944 the second term began to be taken in ships once again, first the converted merchant ship Corinthian and the old light cruisers Dauntless and Diomedes and then from 1945 the faithful Frobisher once more.

Ironically soon after Frobisher was restored the name of the Special Entries changed to 'Benbows'. So things remained, one term ashore and two afloat.

Dartmouth recommissioned again in 1946 and Frobisher was replaced by HMS Devonshire the same year... and the latter was replaced by the carrier Triumph in 1953.

Two years later the whole scheme of RN officer training was changed. In some respects the model of the Special Entry at 18 was enlarged in the new COST scheme to include all officers, with Dartmouth being altered from school to naval academy.

The above account could not previously have been written without much research and it

is a tribute to the author of an important new study of *The Churchill Scheme* that it can be done so easily and clearly.

The author is John Beattie a member of the Benbow Term at Eaton Hall on September 1 1946 and the first to go to HMS Devonshire. He was invalided out of the Navy in 1957 but then had a distinguished career in industry before becoming the expert on

the history of his entry, the first fruit of which was the compilation of a book of remembrance for Special Entries that was dedicated at Dartmouth in 1992, an institution he had never attended.

The book consists of a well-illustrated chronological account supplemented by copious appendices which set out in detail all 67 terms, those who from these terms attained flag rank, those who were lost or died in the inter-war and immediate post-war periods, material on schools, lists of the officers from Commonwealth and foreign navies who trained with the Special Entries who attained flag rank, a section on interview boards (that goes on to 1986) and a list of officers in charge of Special Entry Training.

The volume also covers those entries associated with the Special Entry, the Direct Entry cadets from the Merchant Navy schools, the Paymaster Cadets and the Artificer Direct Entries.

The result is a most useful book of reference and an important contribution to the history of naval officer entry and training. This has tended, misleadingly,

to concentrate on the history of Dartmouth, important though that is.

Beattie is always ready to sing the comparative praises of 'Pubs' versus 'Darts'. Sometimes the criticism of the Darts verges on the tribal, but it would appear that from the mid-30s the comparison of 'Pubs' and 'Darts' in both quality and quantity was moving in the former's favour.

There are issues here worthy of further research however; the author admits that 'Pubs' did better in the training cruiser because they were older.

The name 'Public School Entry' seems well founded when one looks at the schools from which Special Entries were drawn: unsurprisingly, Pangbourne Nautical College topped the list but Portsmouth Grammar School was very well represented with almost as many entries as Eton and more than Rugby or Winchester.

The decision to send term SE48 to Dartmouth is a matter of some significance as one of its more distinguished members was Prince Philip of Greece, who made a distinct impression on Princess Elizabeth on a royal visit to the College that summer.

Beattie says that the term did not go to Frobisher or Vindictive because of overcrowding but close study of the excellent tables makes one question this. In other accounts of this matter, including my own, the cause was Frobisher and Vindictive being considered in 1939 for conversion to active service (Vindictive as a repair ship).

Another quibble is the book's reference to the commemoration at Dartmouth for Special Entry Midshipman Brett Ince, killed on the bridge of Prince of Wales on 24 May 1941, as a mere plaque.



Prints in print

DESCRIBED by Queen Victoria as the 'noblest of institutions' it would be difficult to think of a hospital more loved than the Royal Hospital Haslar.

Some of the great London hospitals have earlier foundations, but Haslar's story of British military history is unique. The 8,000-12,000 bodies which lie buried in the paddock bear testimony to Britain's global reach since the 1750s.

Eric Birbeck, Ann Ryder, and Phillip Ward did not set out to write a detailed history of the hospital and its considerable contribution to medical advances over the centuries – several historians have already done that.

Their aim with *The Royal Hospital Haslar: A Pictorial History* (www.haslarheritagegroup.co.uk, £18.99 ISBN 978-1-86077-589-5) was to capture the hospital in photographic form, researching hundreds of images of all aspects of life at Haslar, dating from the Victorian era to its closure in 2007, and the result is a fascinating record of the 256 years of service to the sick and wounded provided by the Gosport hospital.

Looking at the photographs of Haslar's wards with gleaming floors, immaculate bed-linen and dedicated nurses, it's hard to believe that medical care has advanced in every way.

The Haslar Heritage Group also commissioned a new march *Haslar Farewell*, which can be found on the namesake CD, with music performed by the Royal Marines Association Concert Band.

Having served at the altar many times where it is displayed I was always under the impression that all that beautiful chapel was dedicated to the unfortunate young officer's memory.

The Churchill Scheme is a privately-published limited edition and is available from the author at £20 plus postage (£3 per book UK, £6 rest of Europe, £10 rest of world) from J H Beattie, Willow House, Blundel Lane, Stoke D'Abernon, Cobham, Surrey.

It really is a significant piece of work and a mine of information and is highly recommended to anyone who wishes to understand the nature of the Royal Navy's officer corps in the 20th Century.

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Danielle and Matt set the benchmark

Continued from page 44

RAF team after which the RN Veterans took on the Army... and succumbed 0-5.

The RN ladies prevailed 3-2 over the RAF giving them a well-deserved victory and runners-up spot overall.

In the seniors event against a very powerful Army team, only Mne Martin Sadler (Sultan) managed to beat his opponent and the overall score of 1-4 was probably as much as the team could have expected.

The final day opened with a 4-1 victory for the Army over the RN in the U25 contest.

The Army beat the RAF 3 - 2 in the ladies event, but the RAF Veterans stopped the Army making a clean sweep of things by taking that title 3-2.

In the final event of the championships, the Army claimed victories at 1, 2, 3 and 5 seeds in the senior clash with the Air Force and therefore retained the trophy they have held since 1995.

Over the three days, there was much top quality squash in evidence and although the RN did not come away with any silverware, scores and results in many matches did not reflect just how much the RN players have closed the gap on the other two Services, particularly in the ladies and U25 sections.

Cod squad serve up sporting treat

WHILE their command teams and boarding officers were attending a conference, the remaining sailors of the **Fishery Protection Squadron** fought for the squadron's sporting trophy.

The three ships - Tyne, Mersey and Severn - chose sports usual (five-a-side), less usual (bucketball - basketball with a bucket, hence the name) and unusual (cliff and chasm - a scaled-down field gun run) to determine the trophy's fate.

After triumphing in the bucketball and holding Tyne and Severn to draws in the footy, Mersey Marauders were in the lead as they decamped to HMS Collingwood for the demanding cliff and chasm event.

Tyne and Severn were forced to merge teams to form a squad sufficiently large to tackle the demanding physical challenge.

Their combined strengths proved too much - but only just, defeating the Mersey team on penalties.

With gladiatorial combat finished, the fish gong wasn't awarded for another ten days because the PTIs apparently took rather a long time to calculate the results (according to the Mersey team "they probably ran out of fingers to count on...").

Two-up down in Somerset

YEOVILTON'S satellite airfield will abandon flying for an afternoon this month as the Navy's **cyclists** compete.

Merryfield in Ilton, Somerset, is the setting on Friday March 11 for the RNRM Cycling Association's two-up inter-unit team time trial as pairs of riders race against the clock to complete seven laps of a three-mile course around the air station.

The contest is in its fourth year and saw more than 50 teams taking in the 2010 event.

Competitors will be expected to pay £10 per team to cover the cost of the event. Details from LPT Natalie Berry or PO Stu Cox at HMS Raleigh on 01752 811393 or 01752 311943, or visit www.navycycling.org.uk



● **Richie Metcalfe makes a crucial score on the stroke of half-time during the Brothers' narrow defeat away to Warrington Wizards**

Picture: Richard Beattie, SBS Photography

Wizards' late magic

RN Rugby League's 'Band Of Brothers' bowed out of this years Carnegie Challenge Cup with a fantastic performance against current National Summer Conference champions the Warrington Wizards.

The match, played in the historic Wilderspool stadium in Warrington - former home to the Wolves, the North West town's professional club - was a fantastic advert for full-blooded cup football played in the best spirit of the game, *writes WO1 Keith Humpleby.*

After going behind early doors, the RN fought back well throughout the first half with tries for Tommy Wilkinson and a crucial score on half-time for Richie Metcalfe, converted by Dane Smallbone - bringing the visitors within six points of the Wizards at the break.

Another early score by the Wizards was a major setback to the Brothers' recovery but a very strong 25 minutes in the middle of the second period saw the Wizards tire as a seemingly-endless onslaught threatened the home side's line.

This pressure led to two cracking tries with Wilkinson going over for his second and Kev

Botwood crossing in a similar fashion five minutes later to bring the Brothers within two points of the Wizards.

As the clock ran down the Brothers continued to pressure the home side's line, but in a rare break on the back of a penalty the Wizards broke the hearts of the RN with a try out wide.

This score took the Wizards to six points ahead and a superb touchline conversion by experienced prop Nick Owen effectively sealed the match for the home side 28-20.

Two weeks previously the RN were on the right side of a 28-point scoreline with an impressive 28-14 victory over GB Police at Burnaby Road.

The police have a well-earned reputation for being a big, powerful and uncompromising side so this was going to be a big test for the Brothers and new head coach Danny Johnson.

Rising to the occasion in the best possible way Johnson's side, led by hooker Steve Lockton, competed well throughout the first half and at the break were down by two with a try for the skipper and two goals for Botwood keeping the Navy in the game at 8-10.

The second half saw the Brothers begin to dominate proceedings, handling errors were cut down and the team showed much more

cohesion than in the opening half. This was reflected in the scoring of a further four tries three of which went to Rob Sanderson playing in his maiden 1st XIII match on home soil after impressing on the last year's New Zealand tour.

The police never gave up, scoring a try of their own to remind the Brothers how dangerous they could be - but it remained a well-deserved win for the Brothers with strong performances from all 17 players in the squad.

Off the field at January's RNRL executive committee meeting a special presentation of a club blazer was made to Albert Fernandez in recognition of his work as kitman for RNRL both at home and on three tours.

Albert is a familiar figure in the store at Nelson gym as well as the wardroom and WO/SR mess where he also works.

The presentation was made by RNRL chairman Cdr Gareth Hughes and Director of Rugby WO1 Wayne Okell.

With the defeat at Warrington, the RNRL fixture list is being amended to make the best use of preparation time for September's Inter-Service series.

Up-to-date fixture lists will be posted on the RNRL website at: www.pitchero.com/clubs/royalnavyrugbyleague

'sex bomb, ladies run rampant

ON A seemingly perfect, windless night for football, the RN Seniors played only their second competitive match of the 10/11 season against Middlesex at Uxbridge FC.

Highly-charged from the off, the RN side immediately had Middlesex under the cosh.

In the eighth minute a mazy dribble by left winger, PO(PT) Ritchie Way (Collingwood) resulted in Mne Mickey Husbands' (CTCRM) header being blocked.

The new partnership of Cpl Davie Carns (40 Cdo) and Mne Scott Sampson (42 Cdo) at the heart of defence looked strong and very well organised.

Equally formidable was the partnership of Mne 'Foxy' Fox (CTCRM) and Mne 'Katie' Tunstall (Raleigh) in central midfield who dominated proceedings.

At the tip of the spine, the extremely-lively Husbands simply terrorised the Middlesex defence.

After considerable pressure the RN side finally broke through in the 28th minute when an in-swinging corner was flicked on by C/Sgt Richie Hope for skipper Carns to bundle in at the back post - just reward for half an hour of complete domination by the RN.

Further opportunities from Carns, Husbands, Mne Connnett and POPT Way went begging until the 42nd minute when a delightful through ball was played by Connnett to Husbands who carried the ball from just over the half way line to score a superbly-taken goal.

On the stroke of half time, a slick movement across the midfield



Onside with Lt Cdr Neil Horwood, RNFA

and a through ball by Mne Fox found Mne Husbands, who once more slipped the ball under the Middlesex keeper to capture his brace. Middlesex were finding Mne Husbands unplayable as half time arrived.

The Middlesex coaching staff had clearly delivered some choice words at half time and their side came out for the second half with increased resolve and enjoyed more possession during the early exchanges.

The RN back four were looking impregnable in defence and dangerous during their forays up front.

A comfortable lead allowed the Navy coaching staff to provide some of the bench with invaluable match practice.

LPT 'Foxy' Foxwell (Ark Royal) carried the ball from deep in his own half to the Middlesex final third and delivered a vicious shot just wide.

In the 75th minute, AB Parry - a serious contender for man of the match - delivered a Beckhamesque cross which flashed just in front of the RN strikers who couldn't connect.

After this 3-0 victory, the seniors' next opponents were the traditionally-tough Prison Service.

After just three minutes a sumptuous passing move between Foxwell (Ark Royal) and LAET

Thirkle saw the latter flash a cross directly through the Prison penalty box.

The RN dominated the opening quarter of the match but on half an hour the Prison Service delivered a free kick from the right hand side, deep into the Navy box. Hope's clearance was volleyed back toward goal from the edge of the box. The ball flashed past the right-hand post - much to the relief of keeper LPT Matt Shortt.

The RN struck back with a wonderfully-flighted cross from Thirkle which which found Sgt Ads Fowler whose acrobatic diving header hit the Jailers' right post - as close as either side came to scoring in the first 45.

The Prison Service came out strongly after the break and only a series of terrific saves from Shortt kept the scores level.

That ushered in a period of ascent for the RN side - but the sailors and marines were unable to capitalise.

The Prison Service struck back. A scramble in the RN goalmouth resulted in the ball breaking to the Screws' left winger, who slotted the ball past a diving Shortt and into the bottom left corner of the RN net.

Davie Carns came close to an equaliser with a header narrowly wide of the Prison post.

Some superb wing play from

Oxford and Coventry too strong

Continued from page 44

Coventry enjoyed was a fair reflection of the first half.

Scores from Gareth Jones and Aaron Hunt (both Yeovilton) pegged the difference back to 27-12 and spectators were at last being entertained by some competitive rugby with both attacks testing their opposition's defence.

A Coventry try increased their total to 34 before Priddey broke from 20 metres out to notch what proved to be the last score of the match. Final score 34-17.

Away from the 1st XV, the RN Mariners' season began in earnest at Ivel Barbarians pitch against an extremely-youthful Naval Air Command team who had been assembled to play in what has now become a significant fixture in the RNRU calendar, the Paul Dunn Memorial Trophy.

Paul - loved and still very much missed by many - was present in spirit as both teams put on an outstanding display of passionate, open, running rugby.

NAC built on their strong Inter-Command performances, racing into a 19-0 lead by the break.

With some stern words in the dressing room and an influx of new players, the Mariners in the second half were a revelation serving up one of the best halves of Mariners rugby seen over the past few seasons.

They clawed their way back to 19 apiece with 20 minutes to play - then almost blew up by letting in two very soft tries in quick succession. A final flurry saw two tries from the Mariners to level the game 29-29 - a fitting result for a great open game of rugby.

Sheila Dunn, Paul's widow, and the couple's daughter Emma, presented the trophy to both captains after the game.

Speedie quick to take title

THE RN Power Push-Pull Championships at Temeraire saw the largest turn-out for a Navy **powerlifting** competition in the history of the sport with a fantastic afternoon of lifting and various RN records and PBs smashed in the process.

Several new entrants to the sport turned up on the day and gave the experienced lifters - including the RNPA committee in particular - a real run for their money. Particular congratulations must go to PO(AET) Speedie Birchmore for taking the 'best overall lifter' trophy in a very closely-fought competition, just pipping the hotly-favoured Jim Cox to the title.

Congratulations are also in order for Cpl Mark Fleming who attended the WDFPF World Championships in Castleblaney, Ireland.

Mark competed both days in the unequipped and equipped competitions in the 75kg bodyweight class.

He won both of his classes to become a double world champion and set five new world records in the process.

His lifts were 207.5/165.5/247.5kg unequipped and 240/180/260 equipped.

The next RN championship is the RN 'full power and single lifts' event scheduled for May 18 at HMS Temeraire.

This competition will include all three lifts, but it will be up to the individual whether they want to enter one, two or all three events.

There will be prizes for each weight category and a team trophy for the highest scoring team (again made up of three competitors). Regional events will also be held in the interim.

Details from Nick Rakowski (nickowski@yahoo.co.uk), or www.royalnavypowerlifting.com or find us on facebook.

● Super H in the Super G... Lt Holly Dennis (FOST) on her way to taking gold as the fastest woman in the super giant slalom

Pictures: Alex Board/www.alexboardphotography.com



Tignes spirit

BEFORE historic events in Meribel there was the small matter of bragging rights to be settled at the **RN Alpine Championships**, held for the second time at Tignes Val Claret.

Tignes is one of the highest resorts in the French Alps and therefore virtually guaranteed good snow, vital for this event. It encompasses the L'Espace Killy ski and board area – more than 380 kilometres of pistes and many off piste areas, *writes championships director Lt Cdr Rob Taylor (700W NAS).*

It is also linked with Val d'Isère and has an impressive *tranquille* area for those beginners or novice skiers and riders. Along with the excellent on-piste facilities, the Val Claret centre provides a superb base for the event, with everything within walking distance, an easy-to-reach race office and plenty of bars and clubs for the evening entertainment – it doesn't get any better than that! In short, it is the perfect location.

The fortnight started well: thankfully the weather problems which had blighted the UK before Christmas were not a factor and everyone got to the event with minimal difficulty.

The first week was however shortened due to Christmas and New Year falling on a Saturday and the arrival on Sunday was a little hectic. That said, everyone got to their lessons on time the following day and enjoyed a great week of instruction and racing, culminating with the beginners' race, a boarder cross and skier cross race and finally B class and C class races.

The second week got under way and the while the lack of snow affected other resorts across the Alps, Tignes was unaffected with almost all of the runs open throughout the week. In fact the constant sunshine was extremely welcome for those used to a British winter.

The week saw a full instructional programme once again but this time combined with a comprehensive race programme. This included boardercross, parallel giant slalom and slopestyle for the boarders and slalom, giant slalom and super G for the skiers, with B class and C class races alongside the beginners' race once more. The aim of the racing is to develop the skills of alpine and boarder racing while allowing the competitors to demonstrate the courage, grit and determination required of a member of the armed forces. This we have achieved at every level so there is a race for everyone. The second year for the Royal Navy Alpine Championships in Tignes Val Claret brought about some of the closest racing we have ever seen.

The venue provides the perfect preparation for both ski and board teams and this year both the men's and women's races produced a nail-biting finish with Carol Strong and Chris Sharrott finally taking the prizes. On the snowboards, Lt Mick Hawkes took the men's title; Lt Mandy Keenan was winner in the ladies' event. Full results can be found at www.rnwsa.co.uk/results.html.

All in all a successful event, and if there is one message to get across to the rest of the RN and RM communities it is: we need you.

Due to operations and the exchange rate we have seen numbers decrease slowly and we need to get more people out to the Alps to experience the fantastic instruction and racing on offer.

We on the committee will be doing everything we can to provide value for money and to reduce the costs as far as possible. I need your support in allowing time for AT, time to represent your unit and approving the financial support that is vital to the attendees and their families. If there are any questions please get in touch with any of my committee team, details can be found on the website www.rnwsa.co.uk.

I could write for pages about how great I think this event is – one that plays host to over 700 personnel from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines – but I think a personal perspective would express what I want to say even better...

Enter Lt Cdr 'Bins' Brayson (*Naval Flying Standards Flight*):

“Picture the scene if you will, dear Readers, my eldest son, nearly seventeen, on the slopes with the might of the Royal Navy, possessing absolutely no fear, with the potential for him to be embroiled in the

inevitable après-ski and with the prospect of sharing an apartment with 3 women (C/S Cougars). What was I thinking?

The accommodation was already booked by my team leader, as was the Eurostar (more of which later) so the admin was light, for me at least. All that was left was to ensure that we had all our kit in one sock (which, incidentally, was considerably easier given that we were travelling without my dear wife...).

Having never travelled by train on the continent, I was a little sceptical at the prospect. Nothing could be further from the truth, as it was a joy; it has all the benefits of flying, but without the constant requirement to change location every two hours and the faff of airport life (check in, departures, a million reasons to take your shoes off and be touched intimately by hairy blokes, security at the other end, passport control and baggage reclaim etc). You simply get on at St Pancras, and get off seven hours later miraculously about 30 minutes away from your resort – perfect.

We were welcomed at the resort by the championships director which I thought was a very nice touch (turns out he was there to meet the odd admiral or two, but hey, small blessings etc...).

The accom was top notch, and the spa on the ground floor was hit hard every day as the skiing was taking its toll on my ageing body. We shared two self-catering apartments among ten of us.

The main reason to be there, of course was the skiing. Having been to the champs on a few successive years, in Les Menuires, I was immediately struck by the quality of Tignes as a resort.

Yes it's a bit more expensive, but the advantages are immense. The accommodation is generally much closer together, so bumping into oppos from years gone by happens almost without respite.

The skiing was epic. I've never seen so few people on so many slopes, and not having to queue to for the majority of the lifts is unheard of.

The resort offers skiing and boarding for all levels. I opted for the advanced lessons with French Evo instructors rather than the excellent RN tutors. 'Cindy' (yep, our instructor was a charmer...) pushed us hard, but essentially worked on adding the polish to the majority of our group's already-accomplished skiing (apart from mine, that is, as I was clearly in the wrong group).

I think she took pity on me, naturally assuming that I was carrying an injury, as surely I didn't always fall at every opportunity... “Look, Bins is doing zee Turtle again...”

Whilst I was finding inventive new ways of getting down a black run, predominantly on my buttocks, my son was skiing with the rest of the party. Imagine my surprise when we met up to be shown a video of him doing a backflip off a jump on to an airbag the size of a T23 flight deck. I'm pleased to say my deck landings are a bit better than his...

So, having just about survived the two days of lessons, I then found myself staring down the slope at about 50 poles (upright markers, not natives of Poland) and trying to figure out how I was to navigate my way down if I was drawn first in the Slalom A race. Needn't have worried, as I was drawn 66 out of, er, 67. Nice. No probs. Follow the tracks, it'll be just like sitting on the Eurostar, what could go wrong?

My personal record for ski champs races is pretty impressive. I've never made it past the fourth gate, so this year was going to be different...

I actually fell before the commentator managed to get my name out – and long before the first gate. My son watched from the bottom of the slope, so proud...

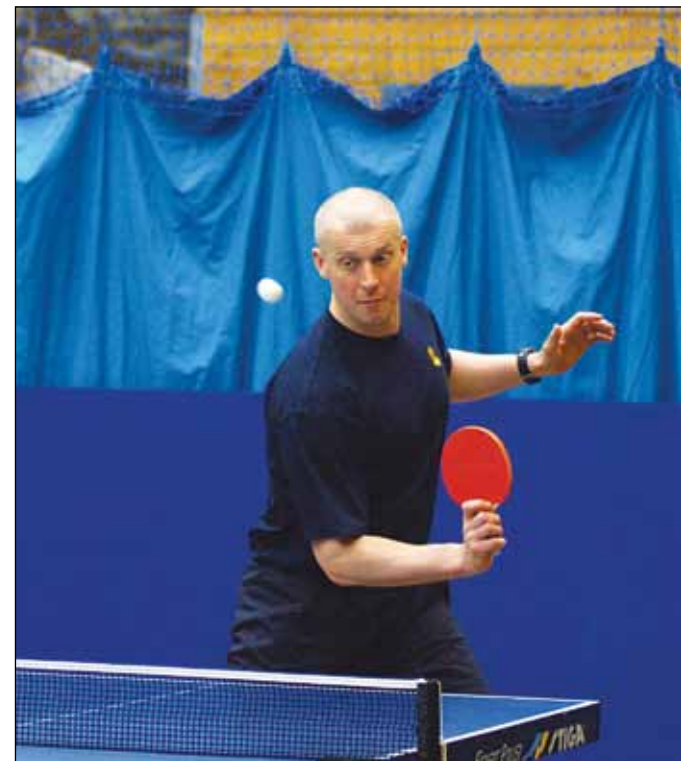
Fortunately, we had some success. One of our party, entered the junior race which was held as a night event, the same night as the beginners' races.

These always attract a terrific turnout. Support was immense and the racing was, as ever, so much fun to watch.

So, the message is very easy to understand: if you have any interest in winter sports whatsoever, then the RN Ski Champs should be very much on your radar.

It is a unique opportunity to compete, improve, learn, meet new people and more importantly get something back for all of your hard work over the remainder of the year.

It does not need to cost the earth, and the committee is constantly striving to make the event even better year upon year, but I reckon they'll have their work cut out. Tignes is absolutely ideal.”



Sultans of ping (pong)

THIS year's Eastern Region Table Tennis Competition saw 32 ping-pongers from Portsmouth, the Defence Diving School, Collingwood and Ark Royal congregate at HMS Sultan.

LPT Cole, with assistance from HMS Sultan's very own table tennis champion CPO Hazel, organised proceedings in the recently reinvigorated Brunel Gym, with the new climbing wall and boxing ring as an appropriate backdrop for the tournament.

A brief was given and the first round got off to a blistering start and we began to see who had what it took to enable to progress into the latter rounds.

It was clear to see from the start that the representatives from the participating establishments were technically gifted and skilled players.

First was the open singles competition which was filtered into cup and plate contest.

HMS Ark Royal was represented proudly by LET Browne who demonstrated his superiority, quickly progressing through to the final where he faced stiff competition in the form of HMS Excellent's WO2 Gibson RM.

This was a close-fought battle but again LET Browne showed his class and overcame his opponent.

The plate competition was in no way outshone by the cup contest with the final a fiercely-contested affair between AB Clinton (Collingwood) and Sultan's ET(ME) Stuart, which saw the former eventually outclass his opponent.

Once the open singles were concluded, the doubles took to the arena with players from the respective establishments pairing up to see which couple could hold their nerve to become the Eastern Region champions.

Again the contest was split into cup and plate. LET Browne and ET(ME) Allen joined forces to represent HMS Ark Royal, progressing all the way to the final where they triumphed over Sultan's PO Moore and ETME Langdon Manning.

The open double's plate finalists were LPT Charret and AB Clinton, who fought hard to beat Sultan's PO Smith and AB Kay.

Picture: LA(Phot) Darby Allen, HMS Sultan



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Danielle and Matt set the benchmark

SNOW and icy road conditions prevented the 2010 Navy Squash Championships taking place on the original dates in December and the revised dates in the new year provided a bumper number of entrants.

The competition attracted 48 squash players, helped somewhat by lowering the veterans' qualifying age to 35 and also lowering the vintage qualifying age to 45 and re-naming that section 'masters', writes Lt Cdr David Cooke.

Although a number of Navy standard players were unavailable, others of lesser ability enjoyed two days of squash, playing for a variety of trophies.

Forty two matches were played on Friday and as a result there were many tired legs on Saturday morning when most competitions were at the semi-final stage.

Familiar faces were engaged in renewing acquaintances with old adversaries as the morning progressed, and by the time the finals were being played, most players had played each other in the past.

The ladies competition was contained to the first day and was contested by nine individuals, a record turnout in recent years. There were some very good matches with Lt Danielle Hancock (RAF Linton on Ouse) coming out tops, beating Sarah Vincent (Collingwood) in the final to retain the title she won last year.

In the men's doubles a new pairing of Lt Matt Ellicott RN (Liverpool) and PO(AEA) Dave Armstrong (Culdrose) beat off all opponents, young and not so young, to take that trophy, one that Armstrong had won for the past two years with different partners.

In the veterans' and masters' events, Lt Cdr Robin Young (Temeraire) once again retained his titles against Dave Milford. The men's plate was won by PO(AEM) 'Smudge' Smith (Sultan) and in the classic plate (losing quarter finalists) WO 'Westy' West (40 Cdo) overcame Armstrong whose legs were beginning to give at that stage!

S/Lt Barry Crosswood (Collingwood) won an U25 competition that produced a disappointing number of entries but in the veterans' plate competition (a necessity as a result of the record number of players in that category) WO Neil Mansey (Cdo Logs Regt) was triumphant.

The men's final was destined to produce a different winner from last year's men's and Under 25 champion, Mne Nick Jezeph, was unavailable.

Predictably current Navy captain, Lt Ellicott eased into the final. His opponent was 'new kid on the block' Musn Mark Hambly (RM Band Portsmouth) who had played extremely well in the early rounds but found Ellicott to hot to handle. Both contributed to some very good rallies, but it was Ellicott's experience that got it in three straight games.

Temeraire also hosted the Inter-Services over three days last month.

The U25s trounced the RAF 5-0, but the RAF veterans avenged that whitewash, despatching the Navy veterans by the same scoreline.

The RN ladies suffered a similar fate to a very strong Army outfit as did the Seniors against the RAF, who had former Navy champion Flt Lt Damien May (ex Captain RM) in the ranks.

On day two the Army U25's made short work of a depleted

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● RN men's team captain – and highest-placed RN skier overall at Meribel – on his way to a top-five finish in the Alpine downhill event

Pictures: LA(Photos) Aaron Hoare and Ben Sutton

Giant leap for skiers

1969. Man set foot on the moon, Concorde took to the skies and the Royal Navy Alpine Ski Team won the Inter-Services.

2011. The moon landings are a dim memory consigned to the history books and Concorde is a museum piece but the Royal Navy Men's Alpine Ski Team won the Inter-Service Snow Sports Championships, writes Lt Cdr Debs Bhattacharya.

The 42 years between victories were not years spent in a white, barren wilderness but they were peppered with individual successes for generations of team members across the four disciplines: downhill, super-giant slalom, giant slalom and slalom.

However, the team has lacked the strength in depth required to perform consistently well across all disciplines in order to win the overall championship.

It has always been a challenge to get the best skiers from the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines together for the two weeks of training and then the two weeks of competition that lead up to the final week at Inter-Service level.

A solution to this was to grow a large pool of competitive skiers from which to draw on and this has been the team's aim over the last five or six years.

To grow that pool of athletes from the recreational skiers who gain a taste for racing at the Royal Navy Alpine Ski and Snowboarding Championships requires an instructor who is able to deal with the broad range of abilities and who is committed to the team in the long term. That man is Arthur Steiner, an Austrian race trainer – and without him the RN team would not have tasted success this year.

Success in the men's team competition was rooted in the performance of the team in the speed events of downhill and super-giant slalom ('Super G').

Carrying the most race points, the team has built upon its experience in these events over the past three years by participating in the Army downhill and the Royal Navy's Super-G during the respective single-Service competitions.

Placing second in the Inter-Service event behind the Army but ahead of the RAF, the team faced a close competition in the Super-G.

Skiing hard on Super-G day, five of the RN team broke into the top ten splitting apart the three Army and two RAF skiers. Moreover, the Army men faced the dilemma of failing to get a minimum of four of their nominated team of six men down the course which meant that they could no longer qualify for an overall team event.

With two days and four races to go, this threw the RN and RAF into direct competition for the overall championship.

The RAF fought hard but, bearing in mind that the four fastest times from a six-strong team are all important – and despite their two fastest men squeezing ahead of their respective numbers in the RN – the reverse was true for the number three and four positions.

As a result, they could not generate sufficient points in the remaining events to break the RN's lead.

In all it was a fantastic team effort from the RN but there were some stunning individual results.

The RN Men's captain, Lt Chris Sharrott, was placed in the top five in every race and gained a podium third in the Super-G.

This consistency led to him coming second in the overall competition and he was closely followed by Lt Cdr Alex Johnson in fourth place followed by Lt

Rob Corcoran and Lt Cdr Debs Bhattacharya in fifth and sixth respectively.

However, all six men achieved top ten positions with Lt Thomas Hetherington in eighth and Capt Stu Hamilton RM placed ninth.

The challenge in growing a pool of racers for selection to the ladies alpine team has always been greater than that faced by the men and the ladies were only able to front five skiers this year.

Of these only two – Lt Holly Dennis and CPO(PT) Carol Strong – have been in the team for more than two seasons.

That did not prevent Lt Helen Taylor putting in a very gutsy performance in her second season, following a very nasty accident in week one. Cpl Hannah Trudgeon was also enjoying her second season after a break of three years and was hot on Lt Taylor's heels in most of the events.

Although in her first season, Lt Katie Steele chased the other ladies hard proving that we have the elements required for success in the future.

The ladies overall results left Lt Dennis in that most cruel of positions – fourth place. That result did not do justice to her podium finishes in giant slalom and slalom where she came 2nd nor did it reflect her fourth place in the Super-G and sixth place in the downhill. This was undoubtedly the strongest RN Ladies individual result in years.

Missing the first two training weeks, CPO Strong put in a fine performance, placing 10th in Downhill, 8th in Super-G and Giant Slalom and 6th in Slalom. The fact that Helen Taylor placed 11th and 9th in the Downhill and Super-G respectively demonstrates that Ladies Team is growing in strength.



Oxford and Coventry too strong

THE RN rugby union squad has now been picked ahead of this year's defence of the Inter-Service trophy.

The team will once again be captained by Dave Pascoe (771 NAS) with Greg Barden as vice captain (Mark Owen is still recovering from the injury he suffered in last season's win).

In preparation for that crucial series, the Senior XV has enjoyed runs out against Oxford University and Coventry Night Hawks.

Unfortunately the match at Oxford will be remembered for the broken leg suffered by the Oxford right wing, Luke Fenwick.

Before his injury the Navy had started well and were rightly rewarded with an early penalty converted by Pascoe.

A period of sustained pressure forced the University side to concede a couple of penalties in their own 22. Electing not to kick for goal the Navy were rewarded from a five-metre lineout when Ben Priddey (Culdrose) went over for the first try of the game, following a catch and drive by Nial Copeland (Collingwood) the try went unconverted for an 8-0 lead at half time.

The second period started with the Navy being forced to defend for long periods. Oxford's pressure was deservedly rewarded by an unconverted try from their No 8 and captain Stu McKeen.

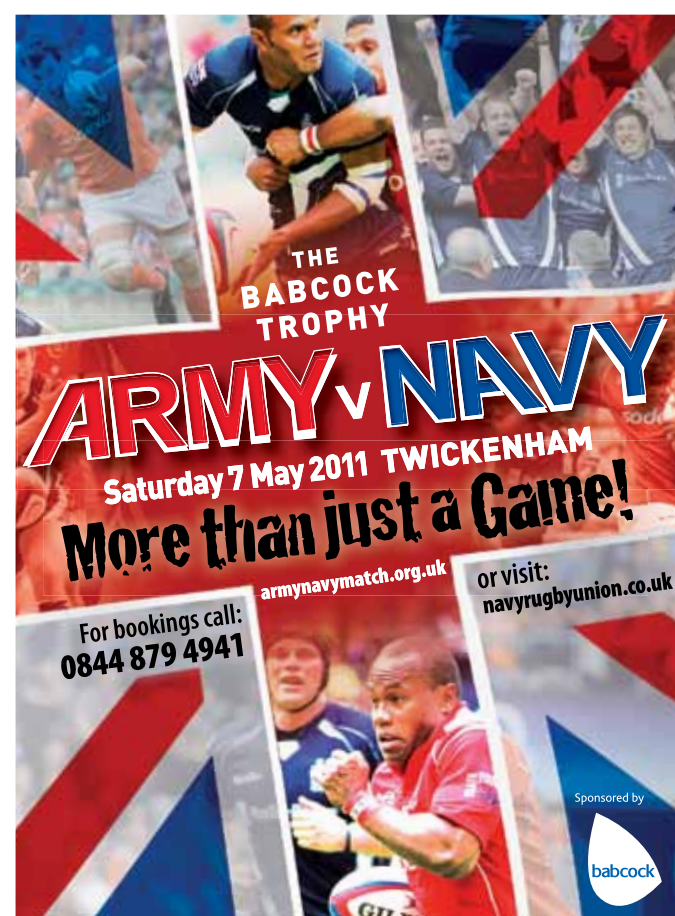
That was followed by the first of two tries from Oxford replacement Luke Jones, sandwiching a score by fly half Hugh Guinness to give the students a 22-8 lead.

The Navy had the last word and following a period of continuity which created the opening for Dale Sleeman (Cumberland) to cross for the RN's second unconverted try to make the final score 22-13.

Against the Night Hawks, the 1st XV suffered their second defeat, not helped by the most lacklustre first half of rugby seen from the Navy for some years.

With the honourable exception of Ian Cooper (Ambush) no-one in a Navy shirt could honestly say they acquitted themselves well and the 27-0 half-time lead

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